

THE
FIRE-BAPTISM OF ALL FLESH

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THE
FIRE-BAPTISM OF ALL FLESH

OR

THE COMING SPIRITUAL CRISIS
OF THE DISPENSATION

BY

S. BORTON BROWN, B.A.

πνεῦμα κρίσεως καὶ πνεῦμα καύσεως

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“When the Great *Love* of God is kindled in thee, it will *burn* more than any *Fire* can do. Thou shalt see also in all the Works of God that *Love* hath poured forth itself into all Things.”

“Also when thou art in *Anguish* and *Trouble* of soul God is not in the *Anguish* or *Trouble*, but His *Love* is there, and bringeth thee out of *Anguish* into God. When God hideth Himself in thee, *Love* is there, and maketh Him manifest in thee.”

“If this most sweet *Love* of God may but kindle a *Fire* in thee, thou shalt feel how it consumeth thy *Selfhood*, that which thou callest I; and thou wilt rejoice so exceedingly in this *Fire* of *Love* that thou wouldst rather suffer thyself to be *killed*, than enter again into thy *something*. Its *Flame* is also so great that it would not leave thee though it should cost thee thy temporal life; it would go with thee in its *Fire* into *Death*; nay, if thou wentest into *Hell*, it would even destroy *Hell* for thy sake.”

CONTENTS.



CHAPTER	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	ix
I. THE TWO-FOLD GIFT, IN CHRIST, OF THE LAMB AND THE BAPTISER	1
II. THE SPIRIT, THE WATER, AND THE BLOOD ...	15
III. BAPTISM INTO THE LIFE AND FIRE OF GOD ...	27
IV. THE FIRE-BAPTISM OF ALL FLESH	43
V. THE WATER DELUGE AND THE DELUGE OF FIRE ...	63
VI. THE BAPTISM OF SOCIETY IN THE FIRE OF GOD ...	87
VII. REDEEMED BY BLOOD AND FIRE	107
VIII. THE CONTENDING STREAMS OF SPIRITUAL AGENCIES : HEAVEN OPENED AND THE ABYSS'	127
IX. THE LORD JESUS BEING REVEALED IN FLAMING FIRE WITH HIS HOLY ONES	143
X. BAPTISM IN THE LAKE OF FIRE	157
XI. SUMMARY	171
XII. "BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY"	185

APPENDIX.

A. THE FIRE PRINCIPLE	205
B. UNQUENCHABLE FIRE	208

INTRODUCTION.

THIS book will be helpful and suggestive to those who do not wrest its words or meaning. It is not written for controversy, but to express what has been burned into me by the *Fire of God*. An intense conviction has taken possession of me, that Society is about to be brought, in the love of God, through a great spiritual crisis, which may truly be called a great FIRE-BAPTISM, and which will ultimately result in great blessedness to man, and in the fuller manifestation of the glory of the Lord.

Not only has every man individually to go through great crises in his personal history, which to him are the special visitation of God; but Society also has its specially great crises, which are to it the visitations of Divine Power. *The First Advent*, with its accompanying Pentecost and Judgment of Jerusalem, was one; *The Second Advent* of Christ, with its special Pentecost and Judgment of Christendom, and

of all nations, will be another. Undoubtedly there are other crises, but these two are the most significant and all-important.

This conviction has become irresistible in me, not merely through meditation on the old prophecies, but by a personal conviction of spirit, through the in-breathing of the ever-living Word which speaks to the inward spirit and understanding. God has given us, as partakers of His Divine nature, to discern the eternal principles of action which have been working all through the history of man, and which are revealed to us as principles of Divine action in present daily life, as well as in God's dealings with man in the past. They are already recorded in Scripture, and are specially revealed in the life of the Christ revealed within us—the key-life to the sufferings which precede, and the glory which shall follow. This conviction is confirmed also by a consideration of the signs of the times, which are, without controversy, intensely significant. But the Word of the Lord needs no controversy or external authority. The authority is in itself, or it is nothing. To whom it comes, it comes right home. The Word, who is Christ, is His own authority.

On the most gigantic scale in Society, in the region of history, on the plain of the race, we shall yet see

the great culminating wonders of the Lord. His judgments are the critical instants of eternity. They are, as to Society, close upon us. They are judgments of *The Fire of Love*, and of the power of God's Spirit. And, on the ground of personality, they are ever being fulfilled.

We are living in critical times, and those who specially study history discern the Crisis. "There has been," says a recent Regius Professor of History, "nothing in the history of man like the present situation. The decadence of the ancient mythologies is very far from affording a parallel. The connection of those mythologies with morality was comparatively slight. Dull and half-animal minds would hardly be conscious of the change, which was partly veiled from them by the continuance of ritual and state creeds; while in the minds of Plato and Marcus Aurelius it made place for the development of a moral religion. The Reformation was a tremendous earthquake: it shook down the fabric of mediæval religion, and, as a consequence of the disturbance in the religious sphere, filled the world with revolutions and wars. But it left the authority of the Bible unshaken, and men might feel that the destructive process had its limit, and that adamant was still beneath their feet. But a world which is keenly alive to the significance

of these questions, reading all that is written about them with almost passionate avidity, finds itself brought to a crisis, the character of which any one may realise, by distinctly presenting to himself the idea of existence without God."

Yes, and in the Divine order it must be that Society should go through this Crisis. All external authorities will lose dominion; all merely outward acknowledgment of God, and mere theologies, all Babylons of ecclesiastical organisation, of sects, of creeds, and of the letter, must pass away, that the reality of the Spirit may take their place. "But therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof."

What is advanced in this book goes beyond an opinion or mere surmise. The principles of God's dealings, and His methods, are certainties; they are revelations to the inward understanding, and are also matters of experience. I know in my own life that God is a consuming fire. I know personally that He is light, and life, and love. I know that by fire and by sword God will plead with all flesh, and does so plead with me, and with others. I know of a surety,

that in a yet more remarkable manner than ever, *He will pour out His Spirit on All Flesh*, and bathe the Heavens and the Earth externally as well as internally, in His regenerating *Fire-Breath*. The certainty to me is irresistible, and without controversy.

As to times and seasons, they are in God's own knowledge and power, and vary according to the preparedness of events. My certainty does not pertain to dates and to time perspective, but to the revelation of God's grace and power, and of His very nature, in His dealings with man, as well as to the great crisis of this dispensation. We are approaching rapidly a very remarkable *Fire-Baptism of All Flesh*, which will penetrate and melt the very heart of all Society.

And we may well cry for its speedy advent, seeing how the glory of the Lord shall be revealed in it. It may be that men do not know the deep secret of all their hungers, and cries, and groans; but there is one ear which translates all expressed, and even suppressed longings, as really the aching void and tormenting thirst for the living God. The inarticulate cries of the heart and flesh of the whole world are going up to Heaven, crying out for the speedy manifestation of the power and glory of the living God, and for the manifestation of the sons of God,

in the *Second Advent of Glory*. The whole Creation groans and travails in pain together, waiting till now. There are the cries of blood, righteous and unrighteous, the yearnings of mothers' hearts, the cries of the multitudinous offspring of the Mother of all living, the cry of the unity of the body of humanity, and the discordant cries of dislocated members of the same body, and the myriad cries from all parts of the universe, all going up into the ears of Him who says to all: "*I will not leave you comfortless: I will come unto you.*"

And, what is even better, the infinite heart of *The Lamb of God*, slain from the foundation of the world, yearns over all, and in all. His blood taketh away the sin of the world; and *His Holy Spirit and Fire* will soon be seen manifestly to baptise ALL FLESH. My soul gathers all its powers into an ecstasy as I say: "*Behold, He cometh, He cometh to judge the earth: He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth.*"

"And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And he that heareth let him say, Come." Come quickly, Lord Jesus, though it be in terrible yet redemptive judgment; come in comfort, in rebuke, in mercy, in clouds rich with blessing; come in Pentecostal Fire; come quickly, Lord Jesus, mighty to judge and save.

Come in the clouds of Heaven in every inward life, that Thy true outward coming may be also realised.

“Great expectation in all lands foretells something. Best hearts are full of hope. All men are in haste. None are able to believe that things will continue long as they are. The new morning, seven times the morning of the Incarnation, cometh; but what an eclipse that morning will bring on existing thought! As day entombs the stars, so will the coming morning bury the present lights of literature and faith. Love is coming; Truth is coming; a New Atmosphere is coming. It will be a severe test. Who — what will be able to stand? Unbelief will be common in the Church. The candles of the altar will go out. Nor will unbelievers be longer satisfied with the lanterns of science. And to multitudes of believers, the new atmosphere will be too searching. The old eyes will be of no avail in the new light. An *Old World* goes out as *The New* comes in. The morning cometh and also the night.”

But He who is always THE COMING ONE, and always coming quickly, and who is specially coming in the great Arrival, as the Son of Man in His glory, is among us even now. He is in us, in our very midst, ever being revealed from the eternal and universal Centre. Men, the great majority of men, know it

not; but blessed is he who can say: "*It has pleased God to reveal His Son in me.*" But all men shall come to know it sooner or later, when the outburst of His presence through His own, and with His own, shall be manifested, and when there shall be a great shaking and fiery amazement breaking forth in the midst of Society from the central consciousness of every man, because God utters His voice and rises up in power to make an utter end, and to bring in everlasting righteousness.

I.

THE TWO-FOLD GIFT, IN CHRIST, OF
THE LAMB AND THE BAPTISER.

I write not for controversy, but to deliver my soul of the burden of the Lord.

I am bold to assert that nothing less than the Salvation of all men in Christ, and the regeneration of the whole universe, will *satisfy* God: even if it take unto the age of the ages to do it.

He, who gave Himself a ransom FOR ALL, to be testified in due time, shall see of the travail of His Soul, and shall be satisfied.

“Your scheme must be as embracing as the Universe or it will fall in ruins.”

“He hath ascended far above all Heavens, THAT HE MIGHT FILL ALL THINGS.”

CHAPTER I.

THE TWO-FOLD GIFT, IN CHRIST, OF THE LAMB AND THE BAPTISER.

It is the magnificent truth of this dispensation, that God the Father has given nothing less than HIMSELF, in all His fulness, in Christ Jesus, to the world. It hath pleased the Father, that not only in Christ, His Son, should all fulness dwell, but that we also should receive, and realise, the reality of sonship, by receiving Christ, and thus be made conscious partakers of His Divine nature and fulness.

It is revealed, that God will have all men saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth; that Christ is the truth, the gift, and power of God; that the gift of God is Eternal Life, and this Life is in His Son; and that He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, will also with Him freely give us all things.

This gift of Divine Love is revealed to us, as two-fold. It includes the bearing away of the sin of the world, and the immersion of the whole being of man

in the fulness of the Divine life. Christ is both *The Lamb of God* who beareth away the sin of the world, and *The baptiser of "all flesh,"* in the Holy Ghost and Fire. I desire in this book to deal specially with the second aspect of this gift: the assured baptism of ALL into the life of God, even though it be through a Baptism of Fire. *O blessed truth of salvation even by fire!* Salvation by being immersed in God who is the consuming fire of LOVE!

We may rest perfectly assured that God will, in His own due time, manifest who is the blessed and *only Potentate*; and will manifest, that Christ, as the gift of God, and of all His fulness, is irresistible in His grace, and power, and infinite Love; and that He will immerse the whole universe, and everything in the universe, in the Spirit of His own life, and will manifestly FILL ALL THINGS.

It is true that it may take a prolonged period to impart the spirit and life and power of Christ, in all His fulness, to all, seeing that the gift contains so much, and has to overcome such grave difficulties of prolonged and obstinate rejection, and of such enormity of sin; and seeing that it has to penetrate all states of being, present and future, and to permeate all dispensations to the age of the ages. Yet, inasmuch as the gift of God is adapted specially

to man's need and nature, and is intended to meet all sin, and is the gift of a Divine will in Christ, who is able to subdue all things to Himself, and of a Love which can never be exhausted or finally conquered by sin, it must in due time conquer every difficulty, meet man's loving acceptance, and penetrate everywhere. Where sin hath abounded there grace shall much more abound.

Certainly, if God gives the gift of the bearing away of its sin to the world, He will see to it, that its sin is really borne away, even its sin of rejection. And if the gift of God is Eternal Life to all flesh, dead in trespasses and sin, He will see to it that life is actually imparted, and death swallowed up in victory. He will show that it cannot be a mere pretentious offer, which falls as a dead letter on a world stronger to reject, than God is to give and to communicate.

It would be only a sadly mitigated and disheartening Gospel to have to announce, that God had a purpose of love towards all, but was unable to save all; or to have to declare, that Christ died for all, but it must come to nothing in a vast number of cases, because He had not the power to make it effective, either in this present life or elsewhere; or to have to say, that God had a purpose to gather up in one all the things in Christ, but rebellious men were too wicked, or too

wilful, or too strong for Him, and that He was obliged to destroy them utterly and for ever. It would be a still more mournful Gospel to have to say that God had the power, but not sufficient love, and that His irresistible grace of salvation extended only to some, and not to all, and that it was limited by time and number and space.

But the fact is, *it is revealed, that "Christ gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time;" that "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world;" that He is "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world;" that "He giveth His life unto the world;" that "He quickeneth all things;" that "He will have all men saved;" that "in Christ all shall be made alive."*

It is only one aspect of the truth, however magnificent that is, to look at Christ as the Lamb of God, who bears away the sin of the world. We do not begin to comprehend the fulness of the marvellous gift of God's love, until we recognise that *the complete gift of God, and the full work of Christ, is to baptise the whole Creation, in due time, in the life of God, and in detail, to immerse and fill all things, in their own order and degree, with the Spirit of His own glorified humanity, for to this end "He hath ascended up far above all heavens THAT HE MIGHT FILL ALL THINGS."* In response to

this love, let none of us narrow and limit, in any way, the fulness and completeness of the gift.

Those who are beginning to realise their sonship will discern the certainty, and necessity, of this two-fold work of Christ; and they cannot be satisfied, till it be accomplished in themselves and in all others. God Himself cannot be satisfied till it be accomplished in all, and until He is recognised as The ALL and in ALL. And the whole creation must groan, and cannot be restrained in its groaning, and travailing in pain together, until its full regeneration is completed, and made manifest by Him who sitteth upon the Throne, and who saith: "*Behold I make all things new.*" This glory of the new creation, as extending to all things, is the appointed vision, and appointed destiny, of all flesh. This must specially be understood inwardly.

But unregenerate man is slow to perceive the deep foundation principles of the purpose of God; and he only rises from the individual and limited view of things to a truer conception of the general and universal truth, as he loses selfhood and as he himself rises into higher and wider regions of experience. He himself must be first brought by personal quickening and regeneration into the *realised kingdom of Spirit*, before he can understand and recognise the

magnificent purpose of God and the deep and far-reaching things of the Spirit.

Yet the regenerate Christian disciple, as he is raised and his eyes are opened spiritually to the Divine method, will discern the truth, that in his own personal experience, in addition to having his sins borne away by Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God, he has personally to pass through a marvellous baptism by Christ in the Holy Ghost and Fire, which shall be a true bearing away of all carnality and death, and shall complete the purity and perfection of his life. And he will discern it as an assured certainty, that these two great works of Christ which are really one will be realised, sooner or later, in the actual experience of every Christian, and become facts in his consciousness, not only as necessary for him, but for the whole world.

Both were specially pointed out by John the Baptist the forerunner of our Saviour, as the two great works of Christ: "*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*" "*He shall baptise you in the Holy Ghost and Fire.*" It must be so, for the truths are fundamental and inseparably connected, because sacrifice always accompanies the true giving of life, and no life can be given without sacrifice. And both may be looked at as promises and real gifts to the

whole world, to be revealed in marvellous power in God's own due time: "*For the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.*" "*He gave Himself a ransom for all, to be revealed in due time.*"

These two inestimable blessings will then be lovingly looked for in his own experience by every Christian disciple, and he will seek to make them known to *all*, because it is impossible for him to enter into the blessedness of full purity and life without them. *The assured certainty is, that every disciple shall be separated from his sin. It is equally certain that he shall be filled unto all the fulness of Divine life and light; and to this end, Christ the Baptiser will immerse him in His own glorified life, the Holy Spirit and Fire. It is not a question admitting possible failure, because God never fails. It is an assured and revealed certainty that "all flesh shall see the salvation of God."*

The sacrificial life-blood of the Lamb, and the Holy Spirit and Fire of God, flowing through the Son from the Father, are the complete and inalienable heritage of MAN, and the gift of Eternal Love. And every believer must experience both in fulness and power, before he can be brought into complete union with God and raised to beatific life. And every unbeliever, before God has completed His work with respect to

him, must be immersed in conditions of this fiery life, in which it will be impossible to remain an unbeliever : *for as I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess the Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

This indissoluble connection between sacrifice and the pouring out of the Spirit is very striking. In the very nature of the Divine order of things, there can be no pouring out of the Spirit as an overwhelming flood of life and power, for the world, without sacrifice on the part of Christ. He must *give Himself*, in order to do it. For it is, in fact, the giving Himself when He pours out His Spirit abundantly. And there can be no receiving the full baptism in the Holy Spirit, for the Christian disciple, without a full surrender of Himself also in sacrifice to God. He who has given Himself as the Lamb of God alone has power to baptise in the Spirit, and He will do it. And only the believer, who has given himself in full surrender to God, can have power to receive the baptism of life and power, in its full sweetness and joy ; and when he is brought to such surrender, he will most certainly receive it in marvellous power.

It is the deep principle of sacrificial efficacy, that “without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin ;” that is, unless life be poured forth, there is

no entrance into the pure and sinless unselfish life. And just as certainly, without sacrifice, there can be no baptism in the Spirit. But seeing that there has been already sacrifice on the part of God in giving Himself, even to the giving of His own life and spirit in Christ, a Pentecost has been possible and certain. Calvary and Pentecost are indissolubly connected.

And in agreement with this principle, we find in the life of our Lord, that He is spoken of first in the Divine order, as the Lamb of God, then as the One who shall baptise in the Holy Ghost and Fire. The Father in sacrifice gives His whole being in Christ, as the Divine Lamb to bear away sin ; but in completing the gift, He pours out His whole being, imparting the fulness of His sevenfold Spirit, His all, through Christ, in the blessed Baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire, in order to fill us unto all the fulness of God.

The principle is the same in each Christian believer receiving the Christ-life : first sacrifice in the giving up of self, even to death, so that there may be the unhindered inflow of the power and life of God. The very sacrifice of the Christian believer is itself a baptism into death, antecedent to a baptism into life. Two things are true : we give all to receive all, and we receive all that we may continually give all.

This vital connection of sacrifice with the streaming

forth of the Spirit of God is very remarkable. The sacrificial stream spoken of in Ezekiel, flowing with the water of Life through sacrifice, just up to the ankles at first, then to the knees, then to the loins, then with water deep enough to swim in, and which brings life whithersoever it cometh, springs forth from under *the altar of sacrifice*, at the south side of the altar, and passes on, carrying blessing through its whole course, till it baptises even THE DEAD SEA, the sea of judgment upon sin, and makes that full of life (Ezek. xlvii.).

Agreeably with this we find in Rev. xxii. that the stream of the Holy Spirit, the river of the Water of Life, flows out from the throne of God and the Lamb: that is from God through sacrifice. "In the midst of the street thereof and on this side of the river, and on that, is *the Tree of Life*, bearing twelve manner of fruits, yielding its fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree are for *the healing of the nations*, and there shall be no curse any more."

Again we find the same principle of life through sacrifice, embodied in historical reality, both in the personal life of Christ, and in the life of the believer. There was, as a fact, no Pentecostal baptism in the Spirit, nor really could there be, till Jesus was glorified in the Spirit, that is till after His full

sacrifice on the Cross, and His ascension into glorified union with the Father. "*It behoved Christ to suffer and to enter into glory.*" He was then in the position, or spiritual region of power, to shed forth the fulness of the Spirit of His glorified life abundantly.

And equally so with us: "*If so be that we suffer with Him, we shall be also glorified together with Him.*" And then out from us also will flow rivers of living water. Drinking of the sacrificial spirit of Christ, or in other words drinking of His blood, surrendering ourselves to the Death, and becoming one with Him in sacrificial unity and glorified life, life will most certainly flow from our glorified life in rivers of living water, for the streams flow from Christ who is our central life: we are then one with Him.

The one absorbing desire then, and expectation of the Christian, who is awake to the reality and fulness of His heritage until it be accomplished in him, will be this baptism in the baptism of Christ. He also will say, "*I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished.*" He will recognise the significance of the purpose of God, and the truth of the ascending order and unity of life, in bringing him from one degree of life to another, *till he is fully baptised into a glorious and perfect unity of spirit with God.*

II.

THE SPIRIT, THE WATER, AND THE
BLOOD.

It is your destiny to be immersed in Life, saturated with Life, till all your being is Life in the fullest and deepest sense. You must be immersed in CHRIST who is the LIFE. "He shall baptise you in the Holy Ghost and fire." He shall immerse and saturate you in the Holy Ghost, the Divine energy and Life of God, until all your being is in utter unity with God and with the glorified life of Humanity as revealed in Christ. And God by Christ will take His own way and time about it.

There is One Baptism, but it is threefold. It is the One Baptism into Life, but into the three ascending gradations of Life making the one unity of Life, Water, Blood, and Spirit.

"There are three that bear record, the Spirit, the Water, and the Blood, and these three agree in One."

CHAPTER II.

THE SPIRIT, THE WATER, AND THE BLOOD.

THERE is *One Baptism*, but it is threefold. It is the One Baptism into Life; but inasmuch as life has its gradations, this Baptism has its gradations and ascending forms even in its unity. It is a baptism of Water, it is a baptism of Blood, it is a baptism of Spirit. There are in this Baptism three that bear record. "It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth, for there are three that bear record, the Spirit, the Water, and the Blood, and these three agree in One." It is deeply interesting to observe how life rises out of a series of births or baptisms.

To those whose eyes are opened, there is manifestly a divine purpose to bring ALL THINGS to a final and glorious destiny and perfection of life; and it is revealed remarkably in the natural ascending order and unity of life. All life is in a lower order, and incomplete, till it reaches THE KINGDOM OF SPIRIT. It

is known to the physiologist that we are all born of water in our natural birth. The latest researches of science show that, in the natural origin of all organic life this is true, that the lowest stage and type of life everywhere is immersed in *water*, and is born out of water. In the ascending order of organic nature, *blood* comes next to water. And the invisible, imponderable *Spirit* which escapes sight, and manipulation, comes highest and latest of all. Until there is the presence or birth of the Spirit, the fulness of life is not reached even in the natural world. Man who is at the head of the natural creation combines all three in their degree even in his natural constitution. Yet he has not reached the full development and outward manifestation of a perfected spiritual nature until he is born again of the Spirit. As facts of natural science, now being discerned, I need not dwell on these truths. The Spirit, the Water, and the Blood, even in the natural order, agree in the one complete unity of life. And Christ went through the natural order, as all sons of men have to do; and the three agree and bear record even in His earthly life. "It is enough that the disciple be as his master."

Corresponding, however, to these three, in the higher order of the birth of Man, in his full relation to God and to the kingdom of the Heavens, the Spirit, the

Water, and the Blood have each their deep significance. “*Except a man be born of water, and of Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.*” That is, both the lower and the higher birth must be passed through. We *must*, as a Divine necessity, be born of Water and of Spirit, in order that life may be perfected and reach its highest heavenly state; because it is in the Divine purpose to complete our development and destiny, and to gather up in One all things in Christ. In other words both the natural and the spiritual birth, both the outward and the inward *must* have their place in the Divine order that we may be complete and brought to eternal glory.

But that which is born of water is in an external sphere and region of life, or that which is born of the flesh is flesh; but that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. “Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye *must* be born again.” The Divine *must* is a prophecy and promise that it shall be. We *must*, all *must*, the whole universe of fallen being in order to ascend to its highest state *must* be born spiritually from above. Before we reach the perfection of life we must be born of THE SPIRIT. The whole Heavens and Earth even are destined to partake of this baptismal birth before they have completed their history and can become the New Heavens and the New Earth. And the whole

Creation, by this birth from above, is destined to be "*delivered from the bondage to corruption*" which is in the lower birth, "*into the liberty of the glory of the Sons of God,*" which is in the higher birth of Spirit. Blood is intermediate between Water and Spirit, and has a relation both to the natural and to the higher sphere according as we look at it as outward or inward.

As recipients of Christ's very Life, before we realise the complete baptism of life this must be included, we must be born of the Divine blood or life of God, not the mere blood of natural man who even in the first Adam is the offspring of God: not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but (of the blood and will) of God.

Blood on earth has its correspondence and significance even in the Eternal world; for Heaven is not a bloodless or lifeless heaven. Partakers of the Eternal life-blood of Christ we must be, immersed in that life as a babe in its mother's life we must be, or we have no life in its deepest meaning and reality in us. "*Except ye eat my flesh, and drink my blood, ye have no life in you,*" As the offspring of God we are born of this Divine blood, the blood of the Eternal nature, which cleanses even the Heavens by its life-current, through imparting the blood of Christ which is the glorified life of humanity and of God. "*All*

things are purged by blood " or by life, but the Heavens with better sacrifices than the blood or life of animals. Flesh and blood, as we know them in our physical bodies, cannot, we know, enter the Kingdom of Heaven ; and flesh and blood in that sense profit nothing ; but the Eternal life-blood of Christ can cleanse all regions, for His blood is life indeed, even the life of Heaven.

Out of a threefold ascending baptismal birth then, man is born gradually into the highest region of life, the Kingdom of the Heavens. Beginning with the lowest birth in the natural and external, he ascends to the spiritual and celestial. In a deep and true significance to those who can spiritually rise to discern it, *the Christ-life in the Christian in its ascending degrees is seen to be born of water, of blood, and of the Spirit*. And thus in completed regeneration the believer enters into the fullest and highest spiritual union with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ and all spiritual worlds.

We press this point as important, because really this baptismal birth is a threefold immersion into and emergence of the man out of ascending orders and powers of life. According to spiritual significance, the washing of water or the baptism of *water* is the outward washing of the life by the external word ; the washing of *blood* or the baptism of *blood* is the more

inward immersion of the life in *the Christ-life by sacrifice* : “buried with Christ by baptism into His death ;” the baptism in the *Spirit* is the still more inward, and still deeper divine baptism into *the Fire and Light of God as SPIRIT, the God of wisdom and love*, into full union with Him ; for “*He that is joined to the Lord is One Spirit.*” The first man Adam is a living soul, the last man Adam is a quickening Spirit.

If we still look separately and more in detail at these three gradations, for the sake of clearer vision, we shall discern that the *washing of water*, out of which the believer is first born, is in its significance according to the Apostle Paul, “*the washing of water by the Word* ;” and we shall find it helpful to look at it as the believer passing through, in outward power, the dispensation of the law and the commandments, or the external truth of God. For as water is that which washes outwardly, and cannot purify the inward nature, so there is an external purification even of the moral and intellectual character and outward conduct of the disciple, by the external word in the letter and law. The old dispensation can say by John the Baptist : “*I baptise you in water unto repentance, but He that cometh after me, whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose, He shall baptise you in the Holy Ghost and in Fire.*”

The immersion or washing of blood, we shall discern to be the deeper inward cleansing of the life, by the inward flow of the life-current of Christ's life through our life, and *it is the entering into and partaking of the Divine and perfect humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of Man in Heaven*, by the assimilation of His flesh and blood with our life, especially in sacrificial power; for except we draw nourishment from the very life substance of Christ we do not live. "*Except ye eat MY FLESH and drink MY BLOOD ye have no life in you.*" Our very nature must be permeated by this inward flowing through us of the life-current of Christ. For just as it is the office of the blood in the body both to nourish and to cleanse, so it is the work of the life-blood of Christ the Lamb to flow through the believer, conveying nourishment to every part, and cleansing all the inward life, from inhumanity, or the beast nature, from selfishness and all sin. "*The blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanseth us from all sin.*"

But finally the immersion or *baptism in the Spirit*—and this includes all in the ONE BAPTISM, the crowning completion of life—is the permeating of the whole being of the man with the fullest spiritual life and light and love of God, making him a *full* partaker in its highest degree of the Divine and spiritual nature of God who is SPIRIT. And so the believer in his

progress onward in the Divine life, is born of Water, and of Blood, and of the Spirit. And these three agree in the complete unity and power and perfection of life. The Baptism is really one in its completeness, and so inclusive that it is only for the sake of analysis that we need divide them.

With respect to these three immersions we read how “Christ hath loved His Church and given Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it *with the washing of water by the Word.*” Christ also “*hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own Blood.*” And as Christ evermore loves us and leaves nothing wanting in bringing us into the unity of the glory of His own life, He immerses us in *His own Life, Spirit, and Fire.* “John indeed,” said Jesus to His waiting ones just before His ascension, “*baptised in water, but ye shall be baptised in the Holy Ghost not many days hence.*” “For in the One Spirit we are all baptised into the One Body.” And so the perfection of the Church, and of each believer, and finally of all the universe, is only reached by a full baptism into the Spirit and Fire of God, which is the crowning and all-inclusive Baptism, so much so that it is called the ONE BAPTISM.

And we shall hereafter see, if we do not see it now, that *All flesh, nay all the creation of God, must pass*

through this baptism in Spirit and Fire, and become transfigured, before all things are made new. “Our scheme must be the scheme of the Universe, or it will fall into ruins.” And God must be ALL, and in ALL. “Christ hath ascended up far above all Heavens that He might fill all things.” And sitting upon the throne He says, “Behold I make ALL THINGS new.” This is the universal regeneration by the Holy Spirit and Fire of God, in which ALL FLESH shall see the salvation of God, and by which ALL THINGS shall be filled with the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of glorified humanity, the brightness of the Father’s glory, and be made new.

III.

BAPTISM INTO THE LIFE AND FIRE
OF GOD.

We believe and know that God is the living God and personal Father of men, that His breath is life, that He can breathe into a poor withered soul and it shall live, can breathe into a whole valley of dry bones and they shall stand up on their feet an exceeding great army of living men.

There is a quivering expectancy in the very air, and men with no pretension to faith feel the premonitory symptoms of something undefinably great and portentous approaching.

Everything is destined to be bathed in the Fire-Breath of the Lord; and who shall abide that Baptism: a day of the Lord which shall burn as an oven.

CHAPTER III.

BAPTISM INTO THE LIFE AND FIRE OF GOD.

BUT what is specifically this immersion in the Holy Spirit and Fire? We cannot be too simple and distinct about this matter. It is really nothing less than being immersed in God's own spiritual life and fire. This life of God, poured forth from Himself as the centre, is able to penetrate and wrap round and flood all the inner structures of the being of those who are baptised in it. And it is the living Christ Himself through whom the work is accomplished, and who immerses those who are ready and able to bear the baptism, in His own glorified Spirit of life and power. He having ascended into perfect union with the Father, as the Son of Man and Son of God, is now in the region of central power, whence He can pour forth this glorified life in streams of quickening power and life, with gracious purpose to fill all things.

Truly also in the unity of the Holy Spirit, which comes forth from the centre of all glorified life, must

be included the spirits of the just made perfect, and all who, being filled with the one Spirit, are joined to the Lord in the spirit of glorified sonship and are *one Spirit*. For wherever He is, or wherever He comes, there are they, and there they come. For their life is hid with Christ in God. And where He comes forth in power in the Spirit, there is experienced the *communion* of the Holy Ghost, the *communion* of the glorified life of the united Church of the living God. And so Christ and all Heaven can come to minister to one soul, according to its need, to pour forth floods of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and to hold festive communion with His own.

God being at the centre of all things, and being Himself the universal centre of all things and men, whenever He works He works from the centre, even when He seems most to work from the outside. And when He pours forth His Spirit He pours it forth from His Divine Centre, as from a fountain of ever springing life and love. This is the divine working where-with He worketh within us so mightily. And when God baptises the life of a man in the Holy Ghost, which is the outflowing Divine energy of His fulness and glory by Christ Jesus, He pours forth the Spirit from this inward centre within the man, until it upsprings and floods the whole being in the power of the Spirit.

Relatively speaking to us who are so much on the earth, and to God who says, "Heaven is my throne and earth is my footstool," this centre is High and lifted up, and the stream descends. Yet also speaking relatively to Him who sets up His throne *within* our Hearts which are His sanctuary, the stream can upspring within us, a well of water springing up into everlasting life, and pour forth streams of living water from this inexhaustible centre of our life hid in God.

In its most blessed manifestation in the individual life of the believer, this baptism is the flooding of all the inward life which is the world of inward motive and region of causes, with the infinitely mighty and infinitely gracious life of God. It is the opening of the windows of the High and Holy place in the interior Heavens within, and the outpouring of life into all the earthly regions of personal human existence, of thought, of feeling, and of action. It is the coming in power of the kingdom of righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, for the doing of the Father's will, on the earth in us, as it is done in Heaven, so that the Holy Ghost fills all the house where we are sitting, all the surrounding locality and sphere of personal life in which we are living and moving, all the whole personality and character, all the whole structure of our moral and even physical

life. In its fullest and most glorious manifestation, it is the glorifying of the Christ-life, the life of Sonship in the believer, with the glory which the Son had with the Father before the world was.

Who can abide the day of the Lord, when He comes for this purpose and in this way? For it is nothing less than the visitation of the mighty God, who is a consuming fire, and who must consume all false life opposed to His. No self life can possibly live where this fiery baptism comes in power; for the burning presence of the Divine life shrivels up the old life of self and sin. *“Every battle of warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood, but this is with burning and fuel of fire. For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given.”*

Prepare ye the way of this Son. “Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.” He is the Lamb of God to bear away sin. Yes, but He is also the one who comes to baptise the soul in the Spirit of holiness and of fire, to burn up all corruption, all dross and chaff, and to pour in divine life and power. Blessed be His holy name.

When the due time is come in the personal experience of the Christian believer for the accomplishment of this Baptism in the Spirit and Fire, it is an immersion into the Spirit which drives specially

into *conflict*, a spiritual conflict of like nature with the temptation succeeding the baptism of Christ in the Spirit, who, on being baptised, was immediately driven by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted for a terrible period by Satan, and to be with the wild beasts, yet afterwards to be ministered unto by angels.

This Baptism in the Spirit and Fire is also the becoming *endued with power* by immersion in the Holy Ghost, *for loving service*, as in the life of Jesus of Nazareth, who went up, after His conflict, "*in the power of the Spirit* into Galilee," and was anointed to preach the Gospel to the poor, and do deeds of mercy and power; and as in the case of the disciples on the day of Pentecost, who were clothed with power, though they were also driven into special persecution and conflict.

This Baptism in the Spirit and Fire is being endued, by immersion into spiritual life, with the Spirit of *fruitfulness*, for the bringing forth of the fruits of the Spirit into the life: "*love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, faith, meekness, temperance, against which there is no law.*"

It is moreover the reception of the Spirit of a quick or living understanding, by the same immersion in the Spirit, which can be expressed as *the opening of*

the understanding, to understand the Scriptures ; an anointing by the Spirit of truth, by which we are in the Spirit to discern and know *all things*, even the deep things of God. “And the anointing from the Holy One, which we receive of Him, abideth in us, and we need not that any man teach us, but as the same anointing teacheth us of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught us we shall abide in Him.”

And it is immersion into the power of witnessing in the demonstration of the Spirit and power, by a manifestation of Christ in the life, which whether accompanied by miraculous gifts or not, for that is not essential to the main thing, is just the great work that needs in these days to be accomplished. “*And ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses to me, in Jerusalem and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth.*”

This Baptism in the Holy Spirit and Fire is nothing less than being immersed in the very atmosphere and living breath of God. We believe and know that God is the living God, and the personal Father of men, that His breath is life, that He can breathe into a poor dead soul and it shall live, can breathe into a whole valley of dry bones and they shall stand up on their

feet, an exceeding great army of living men. But under changed circumstances that same breath, by the very intensity and character of its burning life, can and does breathe a fire of purity and power, in which no impurity can live. It must destroy before it can save; for it is the breath of Him who says, "*I kill and I make alive.*"

The word Spirit meaning breath, the Holy Spirit is strictly and simply *The Holy Breath of God*. Being baptised in the Holy Ghost is being immersed in a more or less intense manifestation and breathing forth of that marvellous breath of God. Being baptised in the Holy Ghost is nothing less than being immersed into that stream of the living breath of God, which, when it was breathed into Adam at first, *as the breath of lives*, made him a living soul; which, when it came down brooding over the mother of our Lord, as a quickening Spirit, made a weak woman of Adam's race conceive God incarnate; which, when it comes down on the soul of man to regenerate him, quickens in the same divine and supernatural way, the New Man, the Babe Christ, within the soul; which, when it came down as a brooding dove, upon the young man Jesus of Nazareth and upsprang within Him, anointed Him as the Lord Christ, the anointed hero of God, who could conquer Satan and all the legions

of the Abyss ; and who could go up in the power of the Spirit, into Galilee, preach the Gospel to the poor, heal the sick, deliver the needy, and raise the dead ; which, when it came down on the hundred and twenty disciples, on the day of Pentecost, filled all the house where they were sitting, sat as cloven tongues of fire upon each of them, and filled their whole being with the fire-breath of God, in courage, and love, and power. In a word, it is no mere "*it*," a mere physical force however complex in nature, or magnificent in dynamical power,—it is nothing less than God breathing forth Himself into man in living action and energy, and in infinite love.

This Baptism in the Spirit of God, the Holy Ghost, is nothing less than being immersed in God Himself, who is Spirit, who is Love, who is Light, who is Life, very Life, and who is a consuming fire. And the whole creation in due time is to be baptised fully, consciously, manifestly in God and in His glory. This is the destiny of all things. "*And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together : for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.*"

Sacrificially considered, this Baptism is an immersion into the sacrificial Spirit of the Lord Christ, and thus into sacrificial union with Him. It is a baptism into His death in order that there may be participation in

the fulness of His life and power to give in sacrifice all the being, with Him who gave all His Being for the life of the world. As the Apostle expresses it, it is being "buried with Christ by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him." That is: if so be that we share in His utter surrender of will to the death, even to the death of the cross, in dying to sin and in loving sacrifice for others, we share also in the fulness of His resurrection-life and power in the glory of perfected life.

In this respect there can be but one principle for all mankind. And sooner or later all must be brought into the region of the death of self, and of sacrifice of the whole being, that they may be brought into the region of life and power. If not voluntarily yet involuntarily. And men will be led by a way that they know not to behold the glory of the Lord, even should it be through blood and fire and pillars of smoke.

This Baptism in the Holy Ghost and Fire is, however, not an isolated or momentary act which takes place only once in the disciple's lifetime, or only once in the world's history, but an ever recurring event, the constant work of God upon the spirit of man through the glorified Christ who is filling all things. The baptism in the fire and life of God commenced in power on the day of Pentecost, when the Church of Christ was baptised in the Spirit and fire of God. It is carried on in power, as every fresh believer arrives at his personal Pentecost for power and service, and for fulness of spiritual life, and when he enters into glorified union with Christ; and it will be consummated in the great Baptism of Fire, in which God shall baptise "ALL FLESH:" the world's great Pentecost, by which Christ shall baptise and try all the world in flaming fire; and which shall be a glory and defence to His believing ones.

When the Church of Christ enters fully into the recognition of this central truth it will discern that this *world-baptism* in the Holy Ghost and Fire is the characteristic and inevitable event of the dispensation, that there is no more uncertainty about its complete accomplishment than there was about the accomplishment of the crucifixion; because it must be accomplished, or the dispensation must fall short of the Divine

purpose and be a failure, and that can never be. And it will discern that it is just the one event which completes the sacrifice of Christ, for whereas the crucifixion was the sacrifice offered in the earthly body and life of the Son of Man, the baptism of the Spirit is the pouring out of the Heavenly, spiritual, glorified life-power of the Christ, who is now, as the *Son of Man*, in perfect union with the Father in Heavenly places. And so the gift of God is completed in Christ, who first sheds His life-blood on earth as the Lamb of God, and who then ascends to the fullest glorified union with the Father at the right hand of power, far above all Heavens, *that He might fill all things*. And this filling all things He accomplishes by pouring forth continually His glorified life-Spirit, which is really His spiritual life-blood and fire: and by baptising in that Spirit each redeemed man individually, as, in God's own time, he becomes ready for the sweet and mighty fulness of the Spirit of love and light: the fulness of God; and by pouring forth at special crises a quickening flood of power upon the world.

This being the dispensation of the Spirit, it behoves us to look for the manifestation, in due time, of the fulness of the power of the Spirit, in the world's great baptism, before the dispensation shall close. There are even now manifest and striking signs that we are

on the edge of the great crisis and of the fulfilment of the Church's vast hopes; and therefore on the eve of remarkable events. Many concur that we are close upon the eve of the second great Advent of the Lord, which will really be accompanied with a Pentecost of fire; for He who is to come will be revealed in flaming fire, when He shall come the second time without sin unto salvation, and appear unto them that look for Him. Prophecies, many of them random ones, and interpretations, many of them very wild, abound; but they all testify to an unusual commotion preceding great events.

There is a quivering expectancy in the very air, and men even who make no profession of faith feel the premonitory symptoms of something undefinably great and portentous approaching. Men's hearts are failing them for fear of the things which are coming upon the earth. It is certain we are approaching a specially great crisis in this dispensation. There is rapidity of movement and development everywhere; both tares and wheat are fast ripening. The present condition of things in many respects is very similar to the expectation and ferment working in men's minds, just before the first Advent of Christ, when many of the Scribes and Pharisees came to the Baptism of John. To them John the Baptist announced the dispensation

of the Spirit and Fire. That dispensation has had its Pentecost at the beginning, and its striking crises while the Spirit has been working silently and gathering in power for more than eighteen centuries. The full and most marvellous crisis of the dispensation, however, has yet to arrive; but its climax is certainly approaching. And when the dispensation of the Spirit really arrives at its flood time, it will be a true deluge of Spirit and Fire, penetrating, and searching, and trying everything with His mighty power.

Even John the Baptist did not define clearly what was included in this Baptism in the Spirit and Fire; and how and when it should take place. He simply confined himself to the prophetic and emphatic announcement that Jesus Christ the coming one would be the great Baptiser. "*He that cometh after me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose, He shall baptise you in the Holy Ghost and in Fire.*"

He suggested plainly, however, that it was connected with the burning of fruitless trees and chaff. It was to be a day of judgment and burning. The Spirit was a fanning Spirit or breath to separate the chaff from the wheat, and an unquenchable fire to burn up the barren growths and husks. The mere letter, the external husk, the chaff of all things and men, the barrenness and chaff even of the elect nation of

the Jews must be thrust into that Fire of God unquenchable. To the opened eye it is seen, that everything must be thrust into, and tried in that fire of God unquenchable. *Everything must be bathed in the fire-breath of the Lord. And who shall abide that baptism ; a day of the Lord which shall burn as an oven.*

Christian disciple, this is a specially personal question ; for God's work of love and power cannot be completed for any one of us till He has separated all the fruitless growths in us, and cast them into the fire, and separated all the chaff and burned it up in His unquenchable fire. *This is a true word of the Lord ; and it is applicable to the outward as well as the inward man. It is true for society, as well as for the individual. It is true for the Jew and Gentile. It is true for the Church as well as for the whole world. By fire will He plead with all flesh.*

IV.

THE FIRE-BAPTISM OF ALL FLESH.

Not only is it possible, but it is certain, that we shall all be immersed in the very stream of God's own quickening life, which flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

Even the seed of the serpent, the generation of vipers shall be immersed in the Holy Ghost and Fire.

We have yet to see divine forces in manifest action sufficiently intense in their potentiality to quicken even the mortal body and to transfigure it.

The body in due time will be baptised in its molecular structure and redeemed from its present subjection to vanity.

Even the creation shall be delivered, and all things be made new.

Why should it be thought a thing incredible that the whole fabric of existing society should be permeated in an unwonted degree with the living breath of God, and with the intense power of the Most High ?

CHAPTER IV.

THE FIRE-BAPTISM OF ALL FLESH.

Is it possible that we poor creatures of flesh and blood, too often merely carnal, grovelling in the dust, content with a low earthly life of fleshly delights, and with an earthly materialistic philosophy, immersed in a worldliness more or less refined ; is it possible, that we can and may be immersed in the very stream of God's own life which pours out from the throne of God and the Lamb? Not only is it possible, it is certain. And this is the gospel of the power and grace of God, in whom even now we live and move and have our being.

It is the only hope of our salvation, that Christ who is the Saviour of the world, the Lamb of God, should immerse us in the divine life and fire of His own glorified Spirit. I have been deeply struck with the certainty of the unconditional promise of God, given through John the Baptist, as being made not to Christians, because there were no Christians when the

promise was made, but to a mixed multitude of Pharisees, Scribes, Soldiers, Publicans, and the People. It was made before men had begun to be disciples of Christ. It was made to those whom John called "*the offspring of vipers ;*" to those, that is, who had prominently in them, not so much the seed of God, which comes through the reception of the Word, as to those who had received the word and seed of the serpent. To them specially, John the Baptist uttered the promise unconditionally: "*He shall baptise you in the Holy Ghost and Fire.*" (Matt. iii. 7-12).

What! do you mean to say that infallibly, certainly, and irresistibly He will baptise me, even if I am of a viper brood, in the Holy Breath and Fire of God whether I will or not? Yes, with irresistible certainty, sooner or later. If there is an evil seed in us, all the more need for a baptism in the true life, which will bruise the serpent's head, and bring forth in power the true seed of God, the Christ-life within us. And better sooner than later. Better sooner, and that we should be baptised willingly in answer to prayer, and long drawn desire, and patient conscious waiting, in the Comforter, than as rejecters, in the Spirit, as a fiery judgment and searching power.

Christ came in prayer to His baptism of the Spirit ;

the Disciples came also, with one accord and continued prayer, waiting for the promise of the Father, to their Pentecost. Jerusalem, all unconscious, careless and sinfully rejecting Christ, not knowing the day of its visitation, found that the fiery judgment could come all unaware, and storm down hot blasts of trial and woe. Ah, in the very nature of things, it will all depend on the condition in which we are, when plunged into the Spirit of the intense life of God, what the experience of it will be. Because it may be either as a surrounding atmosphere and bath of love, and joy, and of comforting though purifying fire; or it may be as a terrible blast of fire-breath, or even a condensed lake of fiery judgment: for the lake of fire is, and must be, in God.

*“Our God is a consuming fire.” “With the spirit of His lips will He slay the wicked.”** That is also a baptism in the Holy breath and fire. *“The breath or Spirit of the Lord is like a stream of brimstone,”* says the old prophet. *“It kindles Tophet.” “His breath as an overflowing stream, shall reach to the neck.”* Exposed to this breath, or Spirit, even the

* In Is. xi. 2-4 the word *“Ruach,”* spirit or breath, occurs five times. It is translated “spirit” four times and “breath” once. It would have been better to have translated the word uniformly “spirit.” The same Spirit anoints and slays. “I kill, and I make alive!”

dwellers in Gehenna live and move and have their being, as do all those who are in Hades, as do also all living things. The lake of fire is in God. "If I make my bed in Hell, behold Thou art there." The fire-breath of God can both kill and make alive.

This Baptism may be and will be according to circumstances, like the Baptism of Christ, and of His Disciples, or like the Baptism of Jerusalem and its rejecters, in the terrible siege-fire of the time of its desolation and judgment. It can be a baptism which shall be accompanied and followed by a most blessed condition of things within the interior life, similar to the last few chapters of the Gospel according to John and the first few chapters of the Acts of the Apostles; or it may be like the concluding chapters of the Old Testament, where we read of the refiner's fire, and of the furnace and oven of the day of the Lord, and like some of the more terrible scenes in the Apocalypse.

Nothing can possibly save us from this Baptism, which is coming sooner or later upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. And blessed be God for the certainty; for all His certainties are in love, and can never be anything else. But better for us will it be, if it should be sooner than later. Better that it should be now, on the utter and volun-

tary sacrifice of ourselves to God, coming to us as the fire of blessed life, and of the Comforter, than at any future time as the Spirit of judgment and of burning, coming upon us involuntarily. O God in Christ, let the rush of Thy pure and burning life, tempered by Thy grace, be upon us now.

It has been sometimes thought that the Baptism in the Holy Breath and Fire is reserved alone for the Believer. God reveals, however, that *in the last days, He will pour out that Spirit, that Holy Fire-Breath, upon ALL FLESH*. And it will be in a way it was not done at the first Pentecost, more widely, universally. And the word "*all flesh*" is not and cannot be capriciously chosen. Not only upon all Christian disciples, but upon *all flesh*, will God pour the stream of His breath, both destructive and quickening, both refining and preservative. The extent of this promise of immersion is as wide as the extent of the sacrifice of Christ, as wide as the declaration: "*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*" He that denies that Jesus Christ is come *in the flesh*, is Antichrist. And seeing that Christ comes in the flesh to baptise it in His own life, we may also say, he that denies that Jesus Christ baptises all flesh is also Antichrist. For with what purpose does Christ come into flesh at all, but

to penetrate it, and pour into it His own life, and to baptise it in His own Spirit.

Looking carefully at the great prophecy, in the book of the prophet Joel, of the outpouring of the Spirit upon ALL FLESH, a series of exceedingly terrible events will be found to be connected with that great and notable day of the Lord. The day of the Lord is prophesied as coming, the day when the Lord has His way in judgment, and mercy, and great power. Why should not such a day be welcomed?

Ah, but it is so dreadful! Yes, necessarily to the unbelieving soul, who does not recognise how blessed it is; yes, and even to him who lovingly trembles at God's word. It is verily a day of darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains; but a *morning* which ends in a blessed *evening*. There is a great army of God's judgments, as thick as an army of locusts. *A fire devoureth before them, and behind them a flame burneth.* The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble, the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. And the Lord shall utter His voice before His army; for His camp is very great: for He is strong that executeth His word, for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible, and who can abide it? And afterward—after these sore and terrible

judgments, in which Zion and the people of the Lord are involved, for *judgment must begin at the House of God*—"it shall come to pass, saith God, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh."

But even then, we read of "*blood and fire and pillars of smoke*," which refer to the great sacrifice of all flesh, for blood and fire and pillars of smoke are always the accompaniments of the sacrifice of flesh upon the altar. The sacrifice was first slain and its blood was shed; it was then laid upon the altar and burnt with fire; the pillars of smoke then ascended into heaven, carrying the odour of sacrifice and the transmuted sacrifice, transmuted into ethereal elements which could ascend towards God. We read of the sun being turned into darkness and the moon into blood; which would be most true, as seen through those pillars of smoke of the great sacrifice, in that great and terrible day.

Ah, but the glory of that prophecy consists in the spiritual results which follow and accompany the outpouring of the Spirit upon young and old, upon sons and daughters, and upon servants and hand-maids, and in this declaration: "*And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be delivered* ; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath

said, and in the remnant which the Lord shall call " (Joel ii.).

" Behold the Lord cometh forth out of His place, and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth. And the mountains shall be molten under Him, and the valleys shall be cleft, as wax before the fire, and as waters that are poured down a steep place " (Micah i. 3).

" The Lord hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet. The mountains quake at Him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at His presence; yea, the world and all that dwell therein. Who can stand before His indignation? And who can abide in the fierceness of His anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by Him. The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him " (Nahum i.). He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to him in the convulsions, in the earthquakes, and volcanoes, and storms of fire *in the inward life* of every man who knows the day of visitation; yes, and in the outward convulsions of the external judgments of God which affect the inward life.

The unity of God is perfect, and all His Divine attributes are enfolded in each other. His fury and

His mercy are one ; His fierceness and love are one : His righteousness and peace, His justice and truth, meet in unity. Why does God shake the foundations ? why does smoke go out of His nostrils, and fire out of His mouth ? Why does He thunder and send forth hailstones and coals of fire ? Why does the fire-stream go forth from His breathing in the day of His visitation when He comes in flaming fire ? (Ps. xviii.). It is simply because He is about to judge and deliver. It is because He is both just and merciful in one ; and with a high hand, and an outstretched arm, He means to save by judgment, and destruction, and storms of fire, if necessary. And after the earthquake and fire, the still small voice of the Lord speaks, "*Whosoever calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*" In the day of the outpouring of the Spirit, amid blood and fire and pillars of smoke, indicative of sacrifice and judgment, that is said. And it is THE COMFORTER who convicts of judgment ; because the prince of this world is judged.

And when He is come to the world, He, the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, shall convince *the world* of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. In other words, He shall immerse all flesh in the fire of the conviction of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. This Baptism will come upon all the earth, to try and to

convince them that dwell therein. However highly favoured among men some may be, there is no royal road of immunity from conflict and suffering, if we would be glorified. Through much tribulation must every man enter the kingdom. There is a zone of fire through which we all have to press to the death of self, and the burning up of death and Hell in us, before we reach the land of ever springing light, and of eternal blessedness, in the beatific and still eternity of joy. Most sure am I of this ; and to those who get upon the eternal ground, and see the vision of God, it is discerned that it is so, and that it is all in marvellous grace and love. It is the path our Saviour trod, and because He trod it and conquered, He will bring us safe through into the eternal light of the majesty and glory of the Lord.

When the pouring forth of the Spirit of God is spoken of as an approaching baptism of all flesh, it must not be understood that God is not now present, and immanently working *in all things and in every one*, because it is utterly impossible that there can be any part of His universe where He is not, or where He is not in His degree working according to His Divine measure and nature.

But though God is the universal and living centre of all things, and of all beings, yet He can be either

latent or active, either lying hid and withholding His breath or actively coming forth in power and moving by His Spirit in intense activity to a crisis. "Thou openest Thine hand, they are filled with good ; Thou hidest Thy face, they are troubled ; Thou takest away their breath, they die and return to their dust ; Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they are created ; and Thou renewest the face of the earth."

God can be apparently quiescent to us, and almost seem to have forsaken us. He can arise and shake terribly our whole being. He can come forth out of His place, and come down and tread upon the high places of the earth within us. And the mountains, of all our being, shall be molten under Him, and the valleys shall be cleft, as wax before the fire, and as the waters that are poured down a steep place. God can gird Himself to six days' work of creation, and on the seventh day rest. He can be in the most quiet and orderly events of history, and come forth in a deluge or a dispersion at a tower of Babel, or in a series of terrible miracles in the land of Egypt, or in the Captivity of Babylon, or specially in the Birth of Jesus into the world, or in a startling Pentecost, or in a Reformation, or in a "Great day of the Almighty."

And when the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire is spoken of as the Baptism of all flesh, it must be un-

derstood that not only is every man, woman, and child affected now by the Spirit of God, but shall inevitably participate sooner or later in a still greater movement and power of the Spirit, which shall send a mighty vibration through the whole body of humanity, whether believers or unbelievers. This shall be through the Spirit of God, either moving through the God-ordained and God-derived forces of nature, or moving in the unwonted intensity of social forces throughout the body of society, even to single members of the body, or moving in the Spiritual intensity of the life of those who live in the presence of God, and who come forth to influence and bless society, or in all these combined. All forces, natural and arch-natural, physical, spiritual, and celestial, are God's, and from God. And when God moves in His crises mightily, He moves throughout the whole range of forces, from centre to circumference, according to the laws of Him who, in the greatness of His power, subdues all things to Himself. And whenever or wherever the Spirit of God is specially poured out, that affects the whole body of humanity every where and in every part of it. For when any visitation of a part of the human race takes place, the whole body of humanity must be more or less affected, to its remotest members; for no man lives to himself or dies to himself, and no

man is visited with judgment or quickened to himself. All live to God, and all live to one another, willingly or unwillingly, consciously or unconsciously.

But more than this. We have yet to see Divine forces in manifest action sufficiently intense in their potentiality to quicken even the mortal body and transfigure it. The body, in due time, is to be baptised in its molecular structure and redeemed. Those who have the firstfruits of the Spirit are groaning within themselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of the body. "For if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken *your mortal bodies*, by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." There is no other power stronger or higher than the Spirit of God to effect such a change. And that is quite sufficient, either to disintegrate or to re-form matter: it is sufficient to organise and fill matter with life, and inspire with wisdom, or even to quicken dead organisms. He who is filled with the Spirit without measure is the Resurrection and the Life, and he that believeth in Him, and thus becomes filled with the Holy Spirit, shall never die. The measure of God's ability to redeem and regenerate is the measure of His willingness. He is able to subdue all things to Himself. He will there-

fore subdue all things to Himself, and transfigure all things.

The time is approaching when unwonted powers of the Spirit shall be manifested in action. Signs already appear. The recreative Spirit and renewing and evolving power of God are about to assume specially quickened activity. We are taught in the Word to believe in a New Creation, and that the Christ is the beginning and end of it; to believe in a regeneration of men and a restitution of all things. We are taught to believe in a glorified body, and a resurrection to life, and a shining forth of the righteous as the sun. The New Creation has already begun, and the morning stars have sung at the birth of its King.

There is no other power necessary to bring about these results, than that which has been from the beginning, which created at first, and formed the earth, and called forth life, and built the heavens, and guided the affairs of the universe, and destroyed evil, and regenerated the earth after the flood, and scattered the nations, and sent forth judgments, and brought forth Christ in the flesh, and filled Him with power, and raised Him from the dead, and set Him at God's own right hand, and through whom God is *now filling all things*. There is no other power

needed, and why should it be thought a thing incredible that the whole fabric of existing society should be permeated, in an unwonted degree, with the living breath of God, and with the intense power of the Most High, which shall be so fiery and intense that it shall consume, and destroy, and disintegrate, and bring about terrific judgments, and testify against sin to its utter destruction, as well as reform, and renew, and regenerate, and glorify? Why should it be thought incredible that God should destroy utterly the seed of the serpent, should raise the dead, or open new spiritual faculties, or open Heaven into visibility and fill the earth with angelic visitants, or that He who is to come again should come forth into manifest power, into visibility, with all His holy angels with Him, and sit upon the throne of all hearts and consciences, the throne of His glory?

To me it is not only not incredible, but assured. And signs appear that these events are rapidly approaching in the magnificent purpose of God, when God shall pour forth more wonderfully His Love-energy, His Holy Spirit, and manifest His glory in destruction, and judgment, and restitution. "*All the wicked will He destroy.*" That is absolutely true; and as there is none good, no not one, we must

all partake in the visitation of destruction upon sinners, even those of us who may be called the Israel of God. "*O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in Me thy help is found.*" It is also absolutely true, that "*All flesh shall see the salvation of the Lord,*" and therefore they will believe in that day of vision, for he that believeth not the Son *shall not see life*. "God is just, having salvation." "He is just," and "in His sight shall no flesh living be justified." "He has salvation," and "all flesh shall see the salvation of the Lord." "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." Therefore may we well believe that it is possible and assured that *God will cause all flesh to see the salvation of the Lord*.

Both the manifestation of justice and mercy, of judgment and salvation, must take place in the Divine manifestation of glory. "*Unto Thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy, because Thou renderest unto every man according to his works.*" In the light of revelation, we may have confidence, that God will "consume the wicked out of the earth, until they be no more," and also that "the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

What is there to hinder, in the Divine order and power, the quickening of all flesh, and of the whole

fabric of the earth, till it becomes translucent with the perfection of glorified life, the interpenetration of a new heaven into the region of the old, till it shines with righteousness and glory? For even the creation is to be delivered from its bondage to corruption, and brought into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God. What is there to hinder the visible visitation of the earth with the luminous inhabitants of the heavenly world? The earnest expectation of the Creation is waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God.

What is there to hinder this manifestation of glory, but the delay of the coming Fire-Baptism in all its overwhelming power and blessedness? But it cannot be delayed for ever: and it is much nearer the climax of its coming than some of us may think. "*The Lord is not slack concerning His promises.*" The interpenetration of the Holy Spirit and Fire of God, in sufficient degree and fulness, can make all things gleam with the golden glow of His presence and power. The gradual permeation and increasing power of His Spirit, which sooner or later must come in all, and upon all the lower kingdoms of nature and of humanity, will make them radiant with the white heat and light of His holiness and glory. It is impossible for God to cease in His work of regene-

ration, till the glory of the Lord manifestly pervades the whole earth and Heavens, and all flesh sees it; till all blight, and corruption, and decay, and death are burned away in glory; till all sickness, and disease, and impotency are banished by the infusion of Divine vigour and saving health among all nations; till this body of our humiliation shall become transfigured like unto His most glorious body. “*For if the Spirit of Him that raised up Christ from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.*” “*We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.*”

V.

THE WATER DELUGE, AND THE
DELUGE OF FIRE.

In the history of God's dealings with man we find two world-baptisms, both having their corresponding judgments—the deluge of water and the deluge of fire; both having significance to the whole world. The one has been, the other has to be.

Being drowned in water is being drowned in an element which leaves the dead body to become corrupt. Being baptised in the fire of God, even unto death, is being baptised into the fulness of life which necessitates death to all lower life which cannot exist in it, to corruption and sin in every way, and which cleanses where it consumes.

By a deluge of fire, I understand specially the breaking up of the foundations of the great deep of man's being and of society, and the pouring out from the centre of God's life, who is a consuming fire, such a deluge of spiritual life and fire, that it must destroy that which cannot live in the manifested presence of His glory, and must quicken and transfigure all things that can be quickened and transfigured. "Behold, I make all things new!"

CHAPTER V.

THE WATER DELUGE, AND THE DELUGE OF FIRE.

God deals with man on the plane of the race. Being no respecter of persons His blessings are to all, and His judgments, which are for the sake of blessing, are upon all. The gift of His Son Christ Jesus is to the world; and the free gift came upon all men to justification of life. The absolute unconditional gospel is: "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." The Lamb of God beareth away the sin of the world; and the baptism by Christ is the baptism of all flesh in Spirit and Fire. Yet, seeing that some receive and some do not receive the free gift and walk in the light, the same judgment of the Lord upon the receiver is and must be different in its effect to the same judgment upon the rejecter. The judgment of the flood had a different effect upon Noah and those in the ark, to that which it had upon those who rejected the message of righteousness. It lifted Noah and his sons above the waves and bore him to a new

world, while it swept away from the earth into the unseen state the rejecters of righteousness. So with the judgment of the Deluge of Fire. It will be to some the sweet saving fire of God, to lift into higher and more wonderful conditions; to others, the consuming tempest which will storm down woe, and purge with fiery purging.

In the history of God's dealings with man we find two world-baptisms, both having their corresponding judgments—the deluge of water and the deluge of fire; both having significance to the whole world. The one has been, the other is to be. Corresponding to these there are two baptisms of the individual, as well as of the race, the baptism of water and of the Spirit: that is the baptism of repentance, or John's baptism, and the baptism by Christ in the Spirit. For the sake of clearness in what succeeds let us just refer to these two baptisms and notice their significance.

The Baptism of repentance, as seen in the outward symbol of the baptism of John, signified “*by the washing of water and putting away of the filth of the flesh*,—a reformation of the outward conduct of life,—a reformation expressive, however, only of the inward seeking after righteousness, of the ordering of the conversation aright, to which is shown the salvation

of God. The reception of that baptism is no more than the reception of the hope of a Saviour. *But it is the reception of that hope."*

Baptism in the Spirit into Christ, into union with Him, in sacrificial spirit and fulness of life, is far beyond the first baptism. It is more than baptism into a hope; it is a baptism into the reality of life; for *the least one baptised in the Spirit, and thus the least in the Kingdom of Heaven, is greater than he who is only of John's baptism.*

"The great distinction between the baptism of repentance, and the baptism into Christ, lies in this: the one gives knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins, the other effects salvation through the judgment and condemnation of sin in the flesh." And it is a baptism *into fulness of life* which necessitates death to sin in every way.

These two great baptisms, outward and inward in their character, have their corresponding historical floods, as we have suggested, of judgment upon the world; the flood of water, and the deluge of spirit and fire. "Water and fire are the two great judgments of the Lord; one that has desolated, and one that will desolate the earth." And he who is baptised in the outward symbol, *in water*, should include in signification both baptisms—baptism into death and burial,

the acceptance of the Divine judgment upon sin, and baptism into life, the newness of life in the likeness of the resurrection of Christ (Rom. vi. 3-5). Baptism in this dispensation of the Spirit combines under one sign baptism into death and baptism into God.

It has just been suggested that there are two great judgments of the whole earth, one by water and that which is signified by water, and one by fire. "Death by water is an easy death, whereas fire tortures ere it slays. Man dreads a death by fire much more than by water." God has said He will no more destroy the earth by a flood of water. The next judgment which is revealed as to take place will be *fire*.

"*Every one,*" says Christ, "*shall be salted with fire.*" "Where is the preciousness of a promise not to drown all flesh, when the threatening stands sure that the earth and its inhabitants shall pass through fire? The water of the flood is a judgment which marks God's abhorrence of sin, and raises the chosen souls above the power of sin, through faith in Him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. The water of the flood is the water of cleansing. But water, while it cleanses the living, corrupts the dead; and the water of the flood has a significance not only with respect to the living Noah, but also with respect to the dead flesh of the drowned."

“Water corrupts where it destroys. Fire cleanses where it consumes. There is no corruption where the fire has worked; but all the grosser forms of matter with which it has dealt have been transmuted into finer and indestructible elements. These two, water and fire, are then fitting powers to be the outward and visible signs of the inward and spiritual truths of the two judgments of God: the judgment that declares that the soul that sinneth it shall die, and leaves the sinner to be caught in his own snare; and the judgment that searches out the wickedness of the wicked till He find none. The one judgment, like the action of water upon the dead, delivers over to corruption. The other judgment, like the action of fire, purges away the dross and leaves the incombustible gold; or where there is no gold, destroys the gross material and resolves its component parts into their most ethereal and purified condition.”*

But both these floods have their significance in the life of every man. For every one *must* sooner or later pass through an experience answering to the flood of water, as well as an experience answering to the deluge of Divine fire. That is, every one must pass through *an outward judgment* which marks God’s abhorrence of sin which will overwhelm him, if he is not raised

* “Gifts for Men.”

above the power of sin and the waters of judgment by faith in the righteousness of God and His abhorrence of sin, even though it be only in an outward manner by an ark which only protected the life outwardly, and did not change the inward man. And every one must pass through *an inward visitation* of Divine Fire in the visitation of the Spirit of Him who is a consuming Fire, which will be a most terrible fire-immersion of conflict and inward terror and torment of conscience, if not met in faith at the visitation of the life and comfort and power of God as light and life.

In the fifteenth chapter of "The Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ," we have the introductory scene to the pouring out of the seven last plagues. On the edge of a sea, a glassy sea, mingled with fire, reminding us of the laver or bathing sea in the Temple, on which sea the reflection of the fire from the altar of sacrifice shone, making it ruddy with fire, like mingled water and fire, stand a choir of victorious ones, victors over the beast and his image, and over his mark and the number of his name.

This crystal sea of *water mingled with fire* represents the two baptisms of water and fire, in which all flesh, as the sacrifice of God, is baptised sooner or later; through which the choir who sing on its edge, and who speak of coming plagues, must have passed,

as surely as the children of Israel had passed through the Red Sea before they sang of judgment on its shores and of the discomfiture of the Egyptian. The choir sings thus :

“ Great and marvellous are Thy works,
O Lord God Almighty ;
Righteous and true are Thy ways,
Thou King of the nations.
Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord,
And glorify Thy name ?
Because Thou only art holy ;
Because all the nations shall come
And worship in Thy presence ;
Because Thy judgments were manifested.” *

The water deluge and judgment as an historical event for the world, we know, has already taken place. It is typical of the more outward baptism which every man has to pass through. The passage of the Red Sea, in its relation both to the Egyptians and Israelites, is another aspect of the same baptism. But the historical fire-baptism, in its widest application, has yet to come, though some individuals may have passed through a fire-baptism as a subjective experience and spiritual process of God. The terrible external baptism and deluge of water we read about

* Rev. xv. 3. This song is called the Song of Moses the servant of God, and the Song of the Lamb. It is the song of the two dispensations:

in Genesis. The terrible yet essential and more inward baptism in the fire-breath of God, which is approaching for all flesh, and which is much nearer than many would suppose, we read of specially in the Second Epistle of Peter.

Pentecosts there have been; but this great fiery Pentecost has yet to be felt in its rushing mighty power. And who shall abide it? for this day of the Lord "*shall burn as an oven.*"

The Apostle Peter was baptised in the rushing breath and fire, on the day of Pentecost—a most blessed baptism of power, when cloven tongues of fire sat upon him, and when all the house in which he was sitting with his fellow-disciples was filled with the Spirit; so that *he was literally immersed in the Holy Spirit or Breath.* This Baptism was both inward and outward. He spoke of a great and notable day of the Lord yet to come; and he recognised that the Pentecost which had then already come, though it was the marvellous power of Christ, yet did not exhaust the meaning of the prophecy. To the nation of the Jews, that great and notable day came outwardly as a fiery judgment, in the terrible destruction of Jerusalem, and in the Divine visitation to the national life. But to "*all flesh*" the siege of Jerusalem, and the fiery dissolution of Jewish national life, could

not have possibly been *the baptism of fire* which is to try all the world, because it came only then upon the Jews. That was only a national judgment to a generation filling up the iniquity of their fathers; a fearful physical searching baptism of judgment to those who were then living, and to the generation who filled up the iniquity of Jerusalem, and of their Jewish ancestors.

This same Peter therefore speaks, in his Second Epistle, written long after Pentecost, of the two great world-baptisms: the overflow and perishing of the old world by *water*, which had taken place; and of the great fire-baptism, the day of fire-judgment which was yet to come. “*By the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.*” And the delay of this judgment is, not that God is slack concerning His promise, but it is because He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. “*Yet the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.*” We

ought then to be looking for and hastening "*the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new Heavens and a new Earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*" Let us remember that "*the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation.*"

And though Peter wrote probably just before the destruction of Jerusalem, he was looking farther than national judgments; and was writing to those not living in Jerusalem, but to the strangers scattered abroad through Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, whom the partial judgment on Jerusalem would not specially touch. No prophecy is of any private interpretation, nor is it exhausted by an individual application.

In the first historical baptism of the earth in water, *the earth* and external life upon it *only*, could be affected by the flood of water; but both *the heavens and the earth*, and all connected therewith, are to be affected by the great coming *Fire-Baptism*. This baptism will be both social and spiritual, and must include every one: not Jews only, but "*all flesh*;" and even finally include the physical and animal creation, that all things may be purged, and glorified, and made new. "*Behold, I make all things new.*"

These two last chapters of the Second Epistle of Peter have been considered so extraordinary that biblical critics of the letter have tried to make out that they are not genuine. But the question is of minor importance as to whether Peter is the actual writer or not. Judging from internal evidence and their consistency with the whole revelation of God, we may take them as the Lord's Word to the generations ; for the two baptisms are plainly revealed in many places.

It is incontrovertible that not only does this double baptism of water and fire refer spiritually and individually to every soul who will have to pass through both experiences, and both judgments, in their earthly and spiritual life, which correspond to both these symbols of water and fire; but that society as a whole, the race of man as a race, must before the end pass through these baptisms, and according to their condition individually will be the effect of this Fire-breath upon each and all. Historically and individually two purifications are in the Divine order necessary, the outward and inward; and they are complementary. The fire does what the water cannot do. Everything connected with man, as well as man himself, has finally to be bathed and tried in the fire of God, as the most perfect test and power of the Lord, to perfect His work of grace and love with respect to the creation.

“For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with His chariots like a *whirlwind*, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword will the Lord plead with all flesh” (Isa. lxvi. 15, 16). This is equivalent to the Baptism in the Holy Spirit and Fire, for His sharp two-edged sword is the Spirit of His mouth (Rev. i. 16), and the fire is the fire of His Spirit who is a consuming fire (Heb. xii. 29).

“But who may abide the day of His coming, and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ sope: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness” (Mal. iii. 2, 3).

Yet that which is a terror to the unbeliever, who does not trust the living God, nor repose in His love, is looked at without craven fear by the believer, who loves the everlasting Father, who “serves the living and true God, and waits for His Son from Heaven, whom God has raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivereth us from the wrath to come;” and who is with His believing ones as the sweet Comforter, when they pass through *the Baptism of Fire*. To those who by faith pass through the two baptisms there is the

promise: "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by name; thou art Mine. When thou passest through *the waters*" (the first baptism), "I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through *the fire*" (the second baptism), "thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" (Isa. xliii. 2). The man who truly loves and believes will have utter confidence in God, and can ever say: "Plunge me, O loving Lord, into the purifying stream of thy loving fire; yet only as I am ready for it, and can bear it."

And truly for us creatures of flesh and blood, and transitional life, it is necessary, if the purpose of God is to be accomplished. We must be living sacrifices. The loving Christ says, "*Every man shall be salted with fire, even as every sacrifice is salted with salt.*" And, if necessary, we must be brought into the region of involuntary sacrifice in order that we may become, as Christ became, a voluntary sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savour. And who would not desire to be a living sacrifice voluntarily offered up on the altar of the Eternal love, in fellowship with the Lamb?

It is revealed that not only every man, but that every man's work, shall be tried in the fire, even though he be a worker in the work of God. And much will depend upon the material of a man's

work, as to how the fire shall try and judge and consume. It needs only that a house should be built of wood, hay, and stubble, to make the conflagration terrible and disastrous in its effect; yet the city built of pure gold, and laid with precious stones, which the Lord builds and not man, need not be afraid of conflagration. That city which descends in the new Heavens and new Earth, in the inward kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, within the regenerated man, the city in which God dwells, and where there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor pain,—that will need no more fiery purging; for that can truly dwell in fire. The fire is changed in such a case to fulness of light and comforting warmth.

But the great and awful fiery baptism necessary for those who have not willingly received the kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, is *the second death*, which is a baptism into the condensed spirit of burning, the lake which burneth with the fire of God; that is, the Spirit of the Lord spoken of as a stream of brimstone (*θεῖον*, Divine fire). This is the portion of those who must, in the Divine order and love, be exposed to the power and fiery action of the Spirit of God, because they have not entered into the Spirit of the Lamb, the spirit of surrender and sacri-

fice, and so are not written in *the Lamb's book of life* (Rev. xix. 20 ; xx. 10, 14, 15 ; xxi. 8).

What the final effect of this plunging into the lake, this terrific Divine baptism in fire, shall be, may be discerned by those who are in harmony with the Divine will. What if souls in Divine judgment are brought into a region of awakened consciousness of the utter folly of their selfish beast-like lives, and into the region of intolerable and burning thirst so as to cry out : " Water ! Oh for water to cool my burning woe ! Oh for water to cool my burning tongue ! " And suppose even the faithful Abraham and Lazarus, *as not belonging to the dispensation of the freely given water of life*, are obliged to say, " If we would we could not " ? Yet He that sitteth upon the throne says : "*Behold, I make all things new. . . . I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. . . . I WILL GIVE UNTO HIM THAT IS ATHIRST, OF THE FOUNTAIN OF THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY.*" And a great voice from Heaven, in the midst of all that universal making of ALL THINGS new, says : " Behold, the tabernacle of God is with *men* " (not merely saints), " and He will dwell with them, and *they shall be His people*, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be NO MORE DEATH " (not even second death), "*for the former things are passed away.*"

Into this Lake, death and all death-producing things must be cast. Into this Lake, the beast-nature in us, and in every one in whom it exists, even in all flesh who have not yet parted with the beast-nature, for the Lamb's nature and spirit, must be cast. Everything fearful, unbelieving, everything that defileth and worketh abomination, and maketh a lie, must be baptised in this terrible lake, that the evil may be consumed. All lies, falsities, and cruelties must have their portion in the lake that burneth with Divine fire. And, as God deals with personalities and not mere abstractions, every one that is not living by the life of THE LAMB, that is by the life of the eternal sacrifice, must be cast into this lake, *the second death baptism*. There is no rhetorical flourish nor uncertainty about this; and it is in accordance with the nature of all God's dealings. If the soul will not now undergo a true and voluntary spiritual baptism into sacrificial surrender and death, being buried with Christ by baptism into His death (Rom. vi. 3, 4), it must partake of the second death baptism, which is a casting into *the lake of fire*. Blessed is he who has part in the first death of union with Christ, of losing his life for Christ's sake, for such an one has part also in the first resurrection, and on such the second death hath no power.

With reference to this casting into fire, John the Baptist taught as Divine truth that "*every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.*" Such must be the portion of the barren tree. With reference to the great Baptiser Christ, he adds, "*Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather the wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.*" Such is the portion of the chaff. But the chaff in man is the outward fallen nature, the beast nature, the outward man, which in the natural and lower state of man grows with him, even when the Divine germ is within; just as chaff surrounds the wheat, and necessarily grows with it in the natural order, until the wheat is ripened. This outward man must die or be consumed, that the inward man alone may be preserved in the garner of God.

However terrible it may seem that it should be necessary to baptise men in suffering and conflict, we may accept the truth that there is a *fire-baptism of all flesh* revealed as about to come, which must come inevitably upon all, a *baptism in the intensely burning Spirit of God's own searching life, both in its destructive and quickening power.* It is impossible to escape our loving God and Father, and the mighty power of His searching fire. Why should we desire

to escape Him? Whatever comes in the Divine order upon any one of us, must be under the circumstances the best possible event for us, and *God's very best*. The Spirit of judgment and burning is even now coming increasingly upon all flesh; and by fire and by sword is He even now pleading in a degree with all flesh. And when we look at God's principles in the Divine light, it will be discerned that it is the very best event that could possibly happen to man; when in God's own time and way the fire-deluge of love, as the intense visitation of God, comes upon the whole world, and when everything is wrapped in the fire which makes an end of the old Heavens and Earth, transfiguring them into new Heavens and a new Earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Ah, but will not God temper this fire? Well, as much ever is good for us and even tender to us. He does temper it, and cannot cause a vibration of suffering too much. And death is the relative necessity of our present condition and a means to a more glorious end, and not a finality for any one. "*As I live, I will not the death of the sinner.*" Seeing that God is life and that He lives, why should He be a murderer? The devil may be, and is a murderer from the beginning. But God in the Son is THE LIFE; and He came not to destroy men's lives, but to *save*. "I

and My Father are one." Therefore if we fall into the hands of the living God, who is a consuming fire, it is that we may fall into the hands of life and love.

Yes, but seeing that there is a fire, and that life may be Divine fire, terrible as a searching judgment and as a spirit of burning, coming upon *all flesh* in the Divine purpose and order, the great question is : How shall we meet any such testing time, or time of visitation ? not, How shall we escape it ? How shall we be able, if necessary, to dwell with everlasting burnings ? How shall we be able to dwell in God, who is a consuming fire ? Shall we meet the flame as the three youths met the fire, which could only burn their bonds, and who walked in it with One like unto the Son of God, not a hair of their head being injured, or even the smell of fire lingering upon them ? Shall we meet it as Elijah met his chariot of fire, in which he ascended to Heaven ? Shall we meet it as those who fear the name of the Lord meet the day of the Lord, which shall burn as an oven ; when all proud things, and everything which does wickedly, shall be stubble ; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, leaving neither root nor branch ? (Mal. iv. 1). Shall we meet it as they will upon whom the Sun of Righteousness shall arise, who will go forth and tread down in that fire as ashes, all the

ashes of wickedness, in the day of the furnace of the Lord?

Shall we meet it as the blessed Christ met His fiery baptism, which as a fire-breath baptised Him in suffering, and bore Him to the right hand of power and glory? Ah! that fiery baptism, as a life-long suffering culminating in Gethsemane and the Cross, did indeed burn as a furnace. And to all aspiring disciples the tender Christ says: "Are you able to drink the cup that I drink of, and be baptised with the baptism wherewith I am baptised? And to those who say, "We are able," He gives the baptism of blood, and of the burning vision of Christ, whose face shone as the sun in its strength, and whose feet were as molten brass burning in a furnace, the vision of which struck the Apostle as dead at the burning feet.*

If the sight of Christ struck John the beloved, as dead, at Christ's feet, what will be the effect of the burning vision on the ungodly when He is manifested in flaming fire? † What will be the effect when Christ baptises the whole of society in terrible conflict and in the intense movement of His power?

Shall we meet this flashing forth of Divine power and glory as the disciples met the cloven tongues as

* Acts xii. 2; Rev. i. 17.

† 2 Thess. i. 7; Rev. xiv. 10; xviii. 8, 9, 18; xx. 9, 10, 14, 15.

of fire? Or shall it be as that same generation of unbelieving Jews met the siege-fire of Jerusalem, when the national judgment came, casting them out from the place of privilege into outer darkness, where there was weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth? The great Pentecost will be irresistible. God will not ask, in the great day of the Lord, whether a man would like to be immersed in fire or not, or whether he is ready for visitation. The burning Spirit of the glorified humanity of Christ will come as a thief, and like lightning. By fiery conflict and Divine visitation will He plead with *all flesh*.

“No divine change can be wrought even on God’s elect, save by ‘*passing through the waters and through the fires*’ which are appointed for us; waters and fires as real, though not of this world, as those which burnt on the altar of old, or moved in the laver of the tabernacle. Our Lord can no more spare our nature, than the animal was spared of old by the priest who offered it. And as He in His own body, made under the law, did not shrink from, but fulfilled, the types of suffering, so will He fulfil the same in the bodies of those who are His members, that, ‘being made conformable to His death, they may attain unto the resurrection from among the dead.’” *

* Jukes’s “Restitution of All Things,” p. 80.

VI.

THE BAPTISM OF SOCIETY IN THE
FIRE OF GOD.

“For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven.”

Society, and everything having relation to society, must be put into the crucible of God, which is the furnace of His love, and pass through this day of the Lord which shall burn as an oven.

“He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also Heaven. And this word, *Yet once more*, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. . . . For our God is a CONSUMING FIRE.”

There are latent forces in society at the present moment which, if they were only let loose, are sufficient to shatter the whole fabric of existing society, and bring about universal demolition. The centre of all these forces we know is in God. That tremendous shaking must take place when He arises to shake terribly yet once more the Earth and Heaven. This will be through the convulsion of the inward life of individuals and of multitudes.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BAPTISM OF SOCIETY IN THE FIRE OF GOD.

I HAVE been brought, by a personal baptism in great conflict, to believe in the terrible as well as in the gentle judgments of God, as being necessary agencies of Divine power, and as answering an essentially loving and beneficent purpose, in the present disordered condition of things. I believe in their completeness, in their love, in their wisdom and righteousness. In their extension into the other world, I believe they are more terrible than anything of which we have at present any conception; that they transcend our present faith, and our experience, even as the exceeding glory of those things which God our Father has prepared for those who love Him, transcends all present knowledge and faith; that really God's judgments, though a great deep, are included in His glory, and that we shall all see this finally, and praise Him for His judgments made manifest (Rev. xv. 4).

Provision in Divine love has been made that man may not die in his sins, seeing that it is the Lamb of God who beareth away the sin of the world. But that same Lamb of God has said, "*If ye believe not in Me, ye shall die in your sins.*" Dying in sins may be better than living in them; but the sentence points to a fearful loss of immediate blessedness, and to an entailment of destructive judgment in the region and condition of dark death, where death is entered into as a "*Second Death*," a dark fire-baptism, in the lake of intense divine and fiery visitation, which can work out, even in the love of God, such purposes as He who is love knows to be the absolute best. It is not that God is constrained to adopt any particular course, but He takes it because He knows that it is best; and it is in His nature to do His absolute best for all creatures, and for every man, both in this world and in that which is to come. And the very best thing, under these circumstances, we may find to be the most terrible thing to us apparently. Yet *the ministration of death is glorious. And it is in the Lake of Fire that God destroys Death and Hell utterly and all the beast nature.*

I speak quite within the limits of knowledge when I say that time and locality with the infinite God are nothing, except in His dealings with creatures who

are in time and locality, and that absolutely *nothing* of that sort can separate us from *the eternal love of God in Christ Jesus*, or from the eternal action of God; not even the Lake of Fire, which is the second death, and which is a special and essential experience of love in its most fearful form for those who need it. The *second death*, as a subjective experience, is possible in the present life. The eternal NOW of God includes all things, present and future. *The Second Death*, or *Lake of Fire*, is for all who do not so partake voluntarily in the sacrificial spirit and life of the Lamb as to become written in the Lamb's book of life; and it is irrespective of time and space, though it may be experienced in time and space. The beast that is in us, and death and hell which are our present torment and are our enemies as individuals, may be cast for us even now into "*the Lake of Fire*."

But what is this immersion in the Holy Ghost and Fire as associated with the Baptism of Society? It is the immersion of all society, including the social heavens and earth, in such a fire of the immanent God, coming forth into intensely living action and special energy, that the mountains and high places of all social life, and of all external life, having relation to inward life, shall be molten under the

power of the Lord as wax melteth before the fire, and as water poured down steep places. The old prophets speak of this fire. John the Baptist spoke of it. Christ and His Apostles speak of it. It is nothing less than the Divine energy, by the Spirit of God, moving with intensity, and penetrating all social forces, and the whole social structure. God ever lives, ever moves and works; but even He does not put forth all His Divine energy, speaking relatively, until His full power is really needed and events and men are ready. There are social crises, when the power of God is rapid and intense. Partial crises took place on a considerable scale in association with such events as the siege of Jerusalem, the Reformation, and the French Revolution. But what if a crisis should take place which should affect the whole race? God works from the centre and moves individual hearts from that centre in which He abides intensely even now; but it needs only that He should Himself, as the universal centre, stir up *all* hearts into intense life, or through His power in a few excite many, in order to move the whole of society to its depths, and to shake the whole world.

Society, when the great crisis arrives with its letting loose of the accumulation of the pent-up forces of Divine power, will be shaken to its foundations, and

visited with the tremendous energy of God, which will then be at its flood-time. All hidden forces will be roused. There are latent forces in society at the present time which, if they were only let loose, would be sufficient to shatter the whole fabric of existing society, and to bring about universal demolition. The centre of all latent forces is, we know, in God. God has but to breathe with special intensity upon all hearts, and allow the workings of events to come to a crisis, and the whole fabric of society shall be shaken. *"He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the Earth only, but also Heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. . . . FOR OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE."*

This fiery action of God's Spirit affects all the regions of life, which are the regions of the earthborn affections and desires, the high earthly things, the high religions, the high flesh; so that the rocks of earthliness are cracked and thrown down, and melted in the fire. There is dislocation and disintegration of social landmarks and foundations. Things flow together. Class distinctions melt and become confused. Social habits get broken and dissolved. Tremendous forces upheave society, powers are

overthrown, cherished institutions are destroyed, petrified abuses become broken and removed. Society becomes fused and tried—yes, and purified in the crucible of God.

In this “*once more*” is signified this final and utter shaking. Things will be removed that cannot endure the shaking. It is not a mere shaking, but a sweeping away and purging, and that only will remain which can endure. Let God only send forth His white-robed angels with their golden bowls of judgment, to pour them out upon society, and what a marvellous revolution must take place in all existing things!

As a revealed certainty, the world *must* be baptised in fire. The fire shall try every man’s work; the wood, hay, and stubble of every man’s work must be wrapped in the fire. And the true and precious will be enveloped also in that fire, that the trial of it being much more precious than that of gold, though it be tried in the fire, may be found to the praise and honour of God at His appearing, when He comes forth in flaming, searching fire. I speak from a foretaste of this fire-baptism which has burned an experience in me which nothing can gainsay; for the terrible fierceness of the fire of God’s Spirit tries the faith and works of men even now. And except

those days should be shortened, for the elect's sake, no flesh should be saved.

This fire of God shall try all institutions and laws, all economies, all national politics and traditions: everything must be cast into the crucible of God. The evil of all things must be revealed as well as the good by the brightness of this fire, and evil principles must be destroyed. The world, and all that is of the world, as opposed to God, must be consumed in this fiery Spirit of God; for when He comes specially face to face with the fashions of this world, and the lusts of the world, they must be consumed by the brightness of His face. The world in every man passeth away and the lust thereof. Evil shall not stand in His presence. The fire of God must permeate all things; and because it flows through all things, unless they are of like order, they must be purified, or even destroyed if they cannot be purified. For by this "*once more*" is signified finality and removal.

The fire shall try all men's hearts and faith, all men's habits and principles of life, all men's intellectual beliefs, all his creeds, his ecclesiastical organisations and theologies, his righteousnesses and affections: these heavens of a man's life in this condition of things shall be wrapped in fire. We are even now on the edge of this fire; some of us are in

it. Not that God has not tried these things in their degree before, not that the Divine heat is not in the heart of things now; but the great trying time of terrible testing and sifting and purging and destruction is drawing nigh—the Day of the Lord, which shall burn as a furnace; for the fire shall burst forth from the foundations of the great deep in human hearts and from above, and immerse all things in the fiery baptism of God.

And how shall all these stand the fiery baptism? One may well rise to an ecstasy of joy to think and know that God will not let things remain for ever in the present sorrowful and evil state, but will visit everything and every one most intimately by His Christ, who shall baptise in holy, searching fire. But one may also well tremble; for how much terrible loss there must be! How fearfully shall some be stripped by this fire; how hardly saved even as by fire! Shall society subsist;—will anything be left? Shall the Heavens subsist—shall the earth? We look nevertheless for new Heavens and a new Earth, a new society, all purged and glorified. He shall change the body of our humiliation, and fashion it like unto His glorified body. A new order of glory shall take the place of the order of shame and humiliation and sin.

The very Heavens and Earth, which have now their existence by the Word of God, we are told, are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment, and loss of ungodly men. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the Heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." All present things shall be dissolved in the coming day of God, wherein the Heavens being on fire shall be dissolved—I am not speaking only of the external Heavens—and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new Heavens and a new Earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." The Word of the Lord promises a transfiguration of the Heavens and Earth, inwardly and outwardly considered, and the consumption of temporary husks and chaff, outward fashions, and barren growths. And the holy fire of God shall permeate and dwell in all inward life, as the glory and power of the Lord, till His light and sweetness shall be revealed over all and in all.

Those Heavens which are in the spiritual and religious regions of life, are on fire when burning spiritual agencies of God are in intense activity. "He maketh His angels spirits, His ministers a

flame of fire." His fire-breath pours forth a stream of burning seraphs. Physical fire, in the very nature of things, is most inefficient to burn spiritual beings and the inward life of man. It needs the burning seraphs, with live coals from off the altar, to touch inward corruption and imperfection. There are Heavens which are the ascending degrees or regions of a man's inward and spiritual life; the highest Heavens being immediately around the throne of God and the Lamb, where are the seven burning spirits before the throne.

Even these inward Heavens and highest states of a man's spiritual life need to be tried in the fire of God's own pure life. For even the Heavens are not absolutely clean in God's sight. How much more the earth, and low earthly regions in man, which comprise the lower degrees and states of his life, and of the life of society;—how much more do these need to be wrapped in fire, and tried by the fire-breath of God! These Heavens and Earth must, however, include the whole external sphere of man's dwelling-place, and the external heavens and earth, which are even now filled inwardly with the invisible fire of God's power, ready to be manifested in God's own way and time when the due crisis arrives.

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present

time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be unveiled and shine forth unto us. For the earnest expectation of the creation is awaiting the unveiling of the sons of God. Seeing that the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of Him who subjected it in hope, that the creation itself in due time should be set free from the bondage of corruption, and brought into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and writheth in birth-pangs together to the present hour. And not only so, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly awaiting our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

The baptism of society in the Spirit of Christ, as the universal coming of the fire of God in power, is, in a true aspect of it, the second coming of the Lord; it is really the presence of the Lord being manifested, who is a consuming fire and the brightness of the glory of the Father. This coming or presence of the Lord is described in 2 Thess. i. 7-10, where the Apostle speaks of the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with His mighty angels, "*in flaming fire* taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be

punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.”

This flaming fire, coming forth from the presence of His glory, is the fiery action of the Spirit of God, who then comes forth, working in the mightily manifested presence of the living Christ in the glory of His loving power. And when the glorified spirit of humanity in Christ Jesus, and in His glorified ones who are one in spirit with him, becomes manifested, it will then be seen what is the Holy Ghost, in might and flaming fire coming upon those who know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and what is the sort of loving and gracious destruction which comes out from the presence of the Lord. To be thus destroyed is gain.

And what will be the effect of this intense spiritual life and light, and fire of glory, coming out from the presence of the Lord, and coming into the region of death and darkness and cold earthiness, but a most tremendous taking of vengeance—a divinely loving vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the Gospel? It is light taking vengeance on darkness, love taking vengeance on hatred, grace taking vengeance on disgrace. That is the flaming glory of His power, which will *destroy* all ignorance, by such a full manifestation of power and love and glory, that none

can say, "I do not know;" which will destroy all disinclination to obedience of the Gospel, because it will take all heart out of the disobedient. As one who does not know God, and does not obey the Gospel, I am destroyed when I cease to be ignorant and disobedient, and come to know God and obey His Gospel. As one who knows not God and obeys not the Gospel, I am no longer in existence. I am a new creature. This destruction is eternal in its character, and it arises out of and comes out from the presence of the Lord which is then being manifested from within, and from the glory of His power which is then flashing forth. And that also can be in a most gloriously manifested way, when the saints on earth become filled to all fulness with Christ, glorified with the transparent glory of the indwelling and manifested Christ, and the fulness of the glory of the communion of saints, and of the spirits of the just made perfect, who when Christ appears in glory always come with Him, and hold festive communion, and live in indwelling power with Him, where He abides. For the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of the glorified Christ and of the Father, coming with and through the Spirit of the glorified Church, who are one with Him. This marvellous coming in power is revealed as taking place when the Lord comes to be glorified in His saints and

admired in all them that believe, and it must be destructive because manifested glory must destroy all darkness and evil.

That must be a terrible time of fiery amazement and trial; a time like the blinding time of the striking down of Saul by a light brighter than the midday sun, which blinded and prostrated the unbelieving and disobedient Saul, *who knew not God, and obeyed not the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ*. For if he had known Christ he would have known the Father also, but not knowing Christ he knew not God, and persecuting Christ's disciples he persecuted Christ, and so knew Him not. The vengeance of God is the vengeance of love, for God is love, though accompanied with severity inexpressible, and where necessary sometimes terribly protracted. It is Godlike, and worthy of the God of all grace, who sends His Son to baptise the nations in the Holy Ghost and fire: that Son who came the first time not to destroy men's lives, but to save; and who comes the second time without sin unto salvation.

“Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men;” “Be ye reconciled unto God.” This is no mere sentimental notion and human conceit, for there is and must be terror inexpressible for the selfishly inveterate unbeliever, and for the incorrigible rebel and subtle hypocrite, quite enough to burn and search

and melt and destroy that which must be destroyed. The glory of the Lord can and will destroy "*the adversary*" who may have taken up his abode in us. The glory of the Lord shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath, even through the King of Death. "Who knoweth the power of Thine anger? even according to Thy fear, so is Thy wrath." "All the wicked will He destroy." Yes, and by the æonial destruction of His judgment and grace.

"But if a man die shall he live again?" "Wilt Thou shew wonders to the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise Thee? Shall Thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave, or Thy faithfulness in destruction? Shall Thy wonders be known in the dark, and Thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?" Let the Lord of life answer: "*I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die;*" "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when *the dead* shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself; and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth."

No first death, no second death, no third death, no number of deaths, can transcend the power of Him who is the resurrection and the life. And no condemnation and vengeance can be more terrible than His, or more gracious ; and no flames can be fiercer than the flaming fire of Him who comes thus in His glory, with all His burning angels and spiritual agencies, who Himself is a consuming fire. If, through death, Christ destroys him that had the power of death, the second death is no mere sentimental evasion of sorer punishment, but the most terrible of all Divine visitations. "The breath of the Lord is as a stream of brimstone," though it is experienced only as a refreshingly soft and genial zephyr to him "who can dwell with eternal burnings."

It may seem to some, who do not yet discern spiritual perspective, that I confuse in one act the three distinct events—the manifestation of the sons of God, the judgment on those that know not God and that obey not the Gospel of the Lord Jesus, and the restitution of all things. It is a marvellous picture from foreground to horizon, but it is not my intention to break up into detail, or even into exact order, but to point out principles and salient points here and there. But all these are closely connected, and to some extent intermingled. Believing ones must be

dealt with first, it is a revealed principle ; they must be penetrated from within by the full glory of the Lord. Unbelieving ones must also be searched and tried by the fire, even to the destruction of the old self-life by the searching, flaming glory. Judgment must begin at the house of God, but the ungodly must not expect to escape. "Every man," says Christ, "shall be salted with fire." Truly every man must be bathed in the flaming fire of Love, which pours forth from the presence of the Lord whenever He is revealed in power and glory ; and all corruption must be burned up at His presence. Passing into such a crucible of God, the crucible of burning Love, all corruption must put on incorruption, and that which is mortal must put on immortality, death must be swallowed up in victory, AND GOD MUST BE ALL, AND IN ALL.

These are revelations, but in order fully to accomplish them the flood of fire must be poured out—whether slowly or rapidly matters little, yet will it be most surely ; and there will be the revelation from within the veil of the Lord Jesus, with the angels of His flaming power rendering recompense to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall suffer punishment, even æonial destruction, which comes out from the

face of the Lord and from the glory of His might, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints and to be marvelled at in all them that believe : and this until the glorious work is accomplished of the restitution of all things.

VII.

REDEEMED BY BLOOD AND FIRE.

When God works amid hardness of heart and headstrong unbelief, the conflict, if necessary, is unto blood and fire.

Divine love and power, set on the salvation of a world in sin, are quite equal to the work, and must succeed; and the stronger the resistance the greater the manifestation of force which overcomes it, and the intenser the fire necessary to melt and conquer.

The wrath of the Lamb, which is the wrath of self-sacrificing love, must burn to the lowest Abyss of the universe, with the wrath of a love which lays down all its life, and pours out its blood for sinners, and takes death away abolishing it, and imparts its own life to the sinner, and fills all things with its life-giving spirit and fire.

And Christ the Lamb, who is at the true centre in and with God, manifests Himself sooner or later, as being in the centre of every heart; and He measures the strength of His love with the sinner, and with the man of sin in him, even to the shedding of blood and to the action of Divine fire: and He must conquer; for it is impossible that Christ should fail.

The waters of life are seen to have their origin in the flowing blood and in the sacrificial fire.—*Ezekiel's vision.*

CHAPTER VII.

REDEEMED BY BLOOD AND FIRE.

IN the discernment of the unity of the body, it may be seen by the opened eye, that through the faith of one member of the body another member of the same can be blessed ; and one dead member can be raised by the faith of another living member, in the operation of Him who raiseth from the dead. The faith of Christ Himself is sufficient to raise up children of Abraham from stones, and sons of God from the crushed dust upon which the chief corner-stone has fallen. The reason why Christ was and is the Saviour is that, being one with the Father, He has the faith of God, which is one spirit with God ; and He is the head of the body of humanity, the head of every man, and specially the head of the Church, and “the head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.” And therefore He is the head of the body which God raiseth from the dead. By faith the living head can

raise the dead members. But by the faith of God, He who is the Head can pass through death and know that He shall live again, and that He holds the keys of Hell and Death; and know even that He shall call forth all that are in their graves. By faith the believer, who is dwelling consciously in the Eternal love, can pass through famine, or Crucifixion, Death and Hades, and know that He shall live again. By faith a believer in Christ, when he enters into the fulness of his heritage, shall know that he may also raise the dead, because the works that Christ does shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because Christ has ascended to the right hand of all power, and because it is Christ that worketh in him. By faith a man may discern that disease, ruin, death, and destruction can be God's effective means of grace, and that they are not finalities, but means to an end in the hands of God, and in the gracious purpose of God; that the ministration of death is glorious, antecedently to the ministration of life, which is wonderfully more glorious.

This immersion in the Holy Spirit and Fire is immersion into the life of God, though it may be into life which is the death of death; into the power and not the powerlessness of God; into the love of God, though it should be even into the wrath of the Lamb,

which must burn to the lowest abyss with the wrath of a self-sacrificing love, which lays down its life pouring out its blood for sinners, and which takes death away and abolishes it, and imparts its own life to the sinner. *By very virtue of this life, and power, and intensity of the Spirit, which is also Fire, it must be terrible to the unprepared, to the inveterate, and obstinate, and rebellious.*

Divine power and love, set on the salvation of a world in sin, must have its way, and the stronger the resistance the greater must be the force which is used to overcome it, and the intenser the fire. When God works amid rocks, and the granite grip of earthbound hardness, it must be with earthquake and volcanic force and pulverising storm. When God works amid hardness of heart and headstrong unbelief, and the pride of life, if necessary the conflict shall be to blood and fire. The Christ shall come into the centre of sin in Jerusalem, and shall face the sin, and stir up antagonisms, and bigotry, and hatred, and fierce scorn, and all the satanic sediments of man's evil life. The man of sin will oppose and snarl, will contend and blaspheme, will do his worst: and it did its worst on the Son of Man. The Christ must suffer even to Gethsemane, and the bloody sweat and the Cross. In the conflict with sin, the blood of the Son

of Man must be shed. The conflict is to blood. And the Christ who is the true centre shall manifest Himself in the centre of every heart sooner or later, and measure the strength of His love with the obstinacy of the sinner and with the man of sin in him, even to the shedding of life-blood and the action of Divine fire, and shall conquer; for Christ can never fail. There is nothing that can withstand the work of Christ, which must proceed, even to blood and fire and pillars of smoke. Nothing can withstand this fire of God, for it is God Himself in action. The hardest rock is melted; the earth and all that is therein is burned up, to give place to a new one, in which dwelleth righteousness. Life is born out of anguish and conflict and fire, and even begotten from death, in this order of things born of the Spirit.

Looking at individuals separately, each has to meet his immersion in God's due time, suitably to his progress and condition. *To the Christ-life in the Christian believer*, it will be, as in Christ's baptism, and in the Pentecost to the disciples, a baptism of the Spirit preparatory to service and testimony, to conflict and victory, to fuller fruitfulness, and culminating in a Gethsemane and the Cross, up to the full death of self and the full Resurrection life. The earth and heavens in each life have to be wrapped in fire,

antecedently to the new heavens and the new earth of higher and more purely spiritual life. The baptism in the Holy Ghost and Fire may be looked at either as one process, more or less prolonged, or as a series of immersions in the fire of God unto the full drinking of the cup. "*Are you able to drink the cup that I drink of, and be baptised with the baptism wherewith I am baptised?*" says Jesus to every disciple desiring power and glory. And, remember, service and power and glory are not to be measured by a mere experience which takes place for a few years on earth. Christ's service and power and glory entered upon a new and more wonderful phase after His crucifixion and burial, and resurrection and ascension. "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me;" "It is enough that the disciple be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord;" "I count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord : for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, . . . *that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable to His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.*"

In its form to the unbeliever, who has passed through

in unbelief the milder visitation of the Spirit without deep and loving response, it must be the fire of the love of God in its intenser form—the terrible (κολασις) chastisement, or pruning by æonial fire (Matt. xxv.), when God's due time is come to try every man and all the nations with decisive judgment. And this will be at the time, best described, as the time *when the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all His holy angels with Him, and when He shall sit upon the throne of His glory.* We have an illustration in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew. It is the throne of the glory of the Son of Man, because the coming in glory of the Son of Man will be the irresistible and indisputable glory of Him whose right it is to conquer, and judge, and reign. It can be no coming in glory of the Son of Man, if it is a coming to acknowledge His powerlessness over the sinner. It can be no coming in glory, if all His power is exhausted, and He is not able to bring the sinner into the region of forces which can subdue him, or into those conditions which will bring him into a state of mind and desire which will open the way for salvation.

“The will, even in this world of divided desires, is marvellously susceptible of influence from any person regarded as the holder of keys of our desires. What then shall be the influence upon revolted wills

of Him who shall be revealed as the only holder of the water of life? When fires of judgment shall have merged every conceivable desire of the flesh, the mind, the spirit, into one intolerable, definite, urgent thirst for the water of life, can any bonds be set to the power, thrown by that thirst, into the hands of Him who alone can satisfy it?"

The teaching with respect to Divine fire in the old prophets is significant. I give the Septuagint version, as varying somewhat from our ordinary version from the Hebrew, that both may be compared. "Behold, they all shall be burnt up as sticks in the fire; neither shall they at all deliver their life from the flame. Because thou hast coals of fire sit thou upon them; *these shall be thy help*" (Isa. xlvii. 14, 15). "But the Lord of Hosts shall send dishonour upon thine honour, and burning fire shall be kindled upon thy glory. And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and *he shall sanctify him with burning fire*, and it shall devour the wood as grass. In that day the mountains shall be consumed, and the hills and the forests, and fire shall devour both soul and body: and he that flies shall be as one fleeing from burning flame" (Isa. x. 16-18). "For, behold, the Lord will come as fire, and His chariots as a storm, to render His vengeance with wrath, and His rebuke with a flame of fire. *For with*

the fire of the Lord all the earth shall be judged, and all flesh with His sword" (Isa. lxvi. 15, 16). "Who shall abide the day of His coming, and who shall stand when He appeareth? for *He is like a refiner's fire*" (Mal. iii. 3). "*I will consume thy filthiness out of thee. . . . Because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore I will gather you. . . . As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it to melt it, so will I gather you*" (Ezek. xxii.). These are only a few of the many revelations as to fire as a remedial purifying agent in the power of God, used by Him to redeem from corruption and transmute into fine gold.

O Lord God, what can we poor creatures of flesh and blood do in the day of Thy visitation? Who can abide the day of Thy coming, seeing it is as a refiner's furnace? Who of us can possibly stand this terrible and fiery ordeal? What is man, that Thou shouldst thus deal with him? Is he to be as a moth in the candle of Thy judgment? or as an offering of fat in the fierce fire of Thine altar? Canst Thou be delighted to feast on blood, and the cries of Thy burning sacrifices? Surely not, O most loving Lord. O give Thou unto us the vision of Thy very self, who art the loving Redeemer in Christ, and a vision of the mystery of sacrifice in Thy consuming fire.

Who art thou that repliest against God? Hear thou the Word of the Lord. "I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed;" "I am from everlasting, the Lord thy God, thy Holy One; *thou shalt not die. I have ordained thee for judgment, and founded thee for correction;*" "*My thoughts are not as your thoughts, nor My ways as your ways;*" "*My mercy endureth for ever;*" "*Zion shall be redeemed with judgment;*" "*When My judgments are abroad, the nations shall learn righteousness.*"

Ah! men in the pride of life find it hard to believe in suffering and death, in judgment, and fire, and sacrifice, as the manifestation of God's grace, and of the "depths of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God. How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto Him again? *For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen! I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*"

It is just because God is merciful, and holy, and wise, and loving, that He sends the fiery baptism and

requires sacrifice, that we may be like Himself. And He will, and can, change streams of blood and fire into streams of refreshing water. And from under the altar of sacrifice He can cause to flow streams of life, as in Ezekiel's vision.

Looking at society in the light of prophecy, the Word of the Lord indicates a time, when God's due time shall come, in His own Divine way, to all the world, and He will cause to stream forth streams from the south side of the eternal altar. The stream shall run up hill and down dale, shall cross valleys and streams, and surmount all obstacles, and stream away even to the Dead Sea, deepening in depth and power of life, *till it convert the sea of judgment into life*, and whithersoever it cometh it shall bring life and fertility. The vision of Ezekiel as the vision of the stream of sacrifice will thus be fulfilled (Ezek. xlvii. 1-12).

That which is thus broadly described as life by waters is elsewhere associated with trial by fire. But seeing that the stream comes from the altar of sacrifice first of all, the waters of life have their origin in the flowing blood and in the sacrificial fire. "And I will show wonders in Heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the

moon into blood, *in the presence** of that great and notable day of the Lord. *And it shall come to pass, that whosoever calleth on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*"

After the baptism of the Lord even unto blood and fire comes a blessed fiery Pentecost to the Church; after judgment we shall always find redemption. The law of God is manifest, that lower life should be destroyed to give place to higher. Thus higher life comes through death by fire, life flows through death, life comes forth from destruction, life comes through sacrifice, through "blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke." The life of God first kills lower life, then makes alive with higher life, because lower, weak, sinful life must give place through death to higher, stronger life. True life both destroys and quickens. "To die is gain," is deeper truth than most have as yet seen. The life of God has life enough to kill and spare, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death. By death God kills the seed of the serpent, and that is gain; by death He destroys the root of mischief, and sends forth new life. The stream that comes forth from the altar kills the Dead Sea, and makes all its waters and banks fertile with life and joy (Ezek. xlvii. 8, 9). He that hath an ear

* לפני—before, or in the presence of.

to hear, let him hear. He that hath an eye to see, let him see. He that hath a heart, let him rejoice.

It is one of the Divine certainties, that society has to pass through, not simply in its individual units, but in its corporate capacity and unity, *a great baptism of judgment*. A philosophical friend suggests that the water baptism in society is the external sanitary purification, but the baptism of fire is the internal searching of spiritual forces. This suggestion points to important truths; but the Baptism of Fire is also the coming of the Lord through spiritual forces coming in the form of suffering and terrific judgments, such as are given symbolically and prophetically in the Apocalypse, in Chapter xvi. and elsewhere in that book; in which there shall be a conviction of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; in which there shall be a punitive purification, a tremendous searching, disintegrating, and melting process, searching and pulling to pieces, and rending, and more than crumbling society, in all its various forms, and regions, and hidden life; in which there shall be a thorough melting of the elements of society with fervent heat, and the burning up of its works, so that that which can be burned may be burned up, and that which can abide the fire may abide it. What for? For the glory of God, in the manifestation of

His character, and the good of the universe. It can be nothing less than that, and it must be that. This is the great Pentecost to the world, which can only come when the everlasting Gospel of fear and judgment has been preached in all the world, as a witness to all nations (Rev. xiv. 6, 7).

This is one of the Divine certainties, because there is no other way in which the working out of redemption can be accomplished. Man being such as he is, and in his fallen condition, he has to be redeemed by blood and fire; that is, through sacrifice unto the shedding of blood, and the offering of all on the altar. It is in the eternal and Divine order. All things are purged by blood and fire, and in spiritual transmutation. It is the blood-shedding of the eternal covenant, the pouring forth of the eternal love. It is the eternal necessity of sacrifice. It behoved even Christ to suffer. "*I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished!*" The lamb is slain and roast with fire. And the Christ-life in every man has to pass through the same baptism; and "*if so be that we suffer with Him, we shall be also glorified together.*" "*Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth: I am not come to send peace, but a sword. I am come to send a fire, and would it were already kindled!*" In

His searching time Christ kindles a fire of most intense spiritual heat in the Church, which must also penetrate society and baptise it.

The most recent science demonstrates that physical heat is a mode of physical motion, and fire is heat in intense activity. All natural phenomena are but symbols of inward and spiritual realities. Spiritual fire is the intense action of the life of God vibrating through all the inward life, and permeating the spiritual life of man, and indeed all things permeable to spiritual force. This action, more or less intense, of the Spirit of God, produces spiritual phenomena and results in the region of life, corresponding to all the phenomena of the natural world, produced by what are called natural forces. But even all natural forces, which have their service in God, are but extensions of spiritual power, and God acts in them. The Lord comes forth out of His place into special activity. He comes out of the spiritual region into the physical. The mountains quake at Him, the hills melt, and the earth is burned at His presence ; yea, the world and all that dwell therein. “ He toucheth the hills and they smoke.”

And when man partakes of the Divine nature, and enters into the same degree of spiritual and Divine vibration as God—when he enters into the same

spiritual temperature as the Divine heat and love—he can dwell in the fire of God and the everlasting burnings. And this he can do by entering into true Sonship.

With me there is most unbounded faith in God's grace and glory, in God's justice and righteousness, in God's terrific and tender mercy, which rendereth unto every man according to his works, and whose mercy endureth for ever ; in God's judgments and lake of fire, in the first and second death, and in the eternal stream of the water of life which flows from the throne of God and the Lamb, who is the source of all sacrifice and judgment and salvation. I believe in the whole revelation of God as unveiled in the Scriptures, and in the universe, and in the special revelation or unveiling of Jesus Christ in the Apocalypse. From the beginning God's salvation has been through death and judgment. And as it was in the beginning, it is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

“ The way for all is through the fires, for fire is the great uniter and reconciler of all things ; and things which without fire can never be united, in and through the fire are changed and become one. Therefore every coming of Christ, even in grace, is a day of judgment. Therefore there are fires even for the

elect both now and in the coming day, for our God is a consuming fire; and to dwell in Him we must have a life, which, because it is of the fire, for fire burns not fire, can stand unhurt in it. Therefore our Lord 'came to cast fire into the earth,' and desired nothing more than 'that it should be already kindled;' therefore He says, 'Every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.' For this is the very 'baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire,' that 'spirit of judgment and of burning' promised by the prophet, 'with which the Lord shall purge away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and cleanse the blood of Jerusalem;' after which He will 'create on every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and on all her assemblies, a cloud of smoke by day and the brightness of a flame of fire by night; and upon all the glory shall be a defence;' for 'He is like a refiner's fire, and like to fullers' soap; and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and He shall purify the sons of Levi as gold and silver are purged, that they may offer to the Lord an offering of righteousness.' And as by the hidden fire of this present life, shut up in these bodies of corruption, we are able, by the wondrous chemistry of nature, through corruption to change the fruits and flesh of the earth into our blood, and from blood again into our flesh and bone

and sinew ; so by the fire of God can we be changed, and made partakers of Christ's flesh and blood. In and through Christ we have received this transmutation ; and through His Spirit, which is fire, is this same change accomplished in us." *

* Jukes's " Restitution of All Things," p. 82.

VIII.

THE CONTENDING STREAMS OF
SPIRITUAL AGENCIES: HEAVEN
OPENED AND THE ABYSS.

“Hereafter ye shall see Heaven opened, and angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”

The stream of the Holy Spirit is the stream of God's own life, conveyed through ministering angels in whom the very Spirit of God abides, and through whom the Spirit of God streams in streams of living power.

“A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.” This is a true vision of the fiery judgment which is also a baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire.

A noticeable and striking change is at the present time coming over the nations. They are beginning to be more open to spiritual influences and agencies, *good and evil*.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CONTENDING STREAMS OF SPIRITUAL AGENCIES : HEAVEN OPENED AND THE ABYSS.

I HAVE spoken of the stream of the Holy Ghost and Fire. To me it is a stream literally of life. The substance of the stream is life, even as the substance of the blood is life. The stream of the Holy Ghost is the stream of God's own life in union with His Son, conveyed through ministering angels, in whom the very Spirit of God abides, and through whom the Spirit of God streams in streams of living power. God speaks, and living beings convey His words and thoughts, one with Christ the living Word. God breathes, and His breath is the breath of lives, and of living intelligences. "He maketh His angels breaths, His ministering spirits a flame of fire." We enter into the region of spiritual life, among personalities and instrumentalities, when we have to do with the Holy Spirit, and with the evil spirit. And "*we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against prin-*

cipalities, against powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of evil in the heavenly regions." And when we are in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit, we are surrounded by the chariots of God and His angels, even thousands of angels. And when this fiery judgment is set, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire takes place, we have the interpretation of the vision of Daniel: "The Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened." This is a true vision of the fiery judgment which is also a baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire. Man, in the great spiritual crisis, is immersed in this stream of spiritual life, and of personal influences and agencies.

A noticeable and striking change is at the present time coming over the nations. They are beginning to be more open to spiritual influences and agencies, *good and evil*. The evil spiritual world, with its untold spiritual beings, is being stirred by the prince of the power of the air to unwonted activity. The dark

world is in special commotion. There is the gathering of forces to a great battle, the great battle which shall be more decisive for this poor world than any crisis before. The spiritual organisation of man is quivering to the seductive touch and appeal of evil beings ; acting, however, under the regulated restraint of the Almighty, who never allows any being in the universe to pass beyond His control at any moment. Even now chains of darkness bind within restricted limits. Darkness is limited knowledge, and ignorance binds in chains of darkness. Yet spirits of darkness have their hour and power, the hour and power of darkness. And like as it was at the hour of the Redeemer's great sacrifice, it is in great crises that the full force of evil presses itself on man, with all its power, in evil antagonism. The seductive spirits we read about in the Apocalypse are no myths, and they precede and introduce the great battle of Harmagedon.

We are now fast approaching the great burning conflict having its origin and focus in the spiritual world, that is in the inner world, and which is now even pressing forth and penetrating into the outer world, and which will manifest itself in outward action, in the external world of individual and social and national life. It is noticeable that *it is God who sends His angel, to open the Abyss of the dark world.*

But, on the other hand, there is counter and more wonderful activity descending from the Holy Spirit world—the light world. The Lord Jesus, just before the great crisis of the binding of Satan, is represented as coming forth Faithful and True, and in righteousness, to bring to a crisis and make war. His eyes are as a flame of fire, His vesture is dipped in blood, His breath-word is a sharp two-edged sword. With this breath-sword and word-sword He smites the nations. The armies of Heaven follow Him pure and white. They go forth to certain victory. The Holy Ghost thus proceeds from the Father and the Son.

These spiritual forces take up unwonted activity and are gathering now. Those who are prepared to see them, and know what they are, see them already assuming increased activity. God's spiritual forces are not dead forces, but personalities, through whom His most Holy Spirit operates. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?" To those who can see the sight, a stream of angels may be seen ascending and descending upon the Son of Man; yes, upon the Son of Man in every man in whom the Son abides.

According to the teaching of Christ, there are

legions of good angels ready to start forth at the will of God.* His ministers are flames of fire, burning spirits—seraphim who handle live coals of fire from the altar of sacrifice. According also to the manifestation of Christ's power in casting out evil spirits, there are also legions of evil spirits. According to the teaching of this Christ, who came to destroy the works of the devil, evil spirits have power to infest, and to make the state of a man's heart worse than before. Spirits are not dead, wandering forces ; they are either good or evil intelligences with will and energy, under the control either of the Holy Spirit or under the power of Satanic headship. This is the teaching of Christ.† Man stands amid the ranks of serried contending spiritual agencies. In great spiritual battles he is amid the hot fires of fierce conflict which ever and anon go on in his inward life. *“Every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire. For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given : and the government shall be upon His shoulder.”* And it must be so when Christ the Son comes as the great Warrior, with His mighty angels, to contend for the soul of man, and in his inward spirit ; and when He comes to immerse the nations in the Holy Ghost and Fire.

* Matt. xxvi. 53.

† Matt. xii. 26, 28.

And now, as the second great Coming of the Lord is drawing nigh, these principalities and powers, and spiritual wickednesses in high places, put forth special malignity and effort; and the fact will yet be discerned in terrific errors and flaming passions, and desperate seductions, in socialistic upheavals, and political confederations and schemings. The searching fires of Hell and Heaven in conflict will be fierce to unwonted degrees, and intensely burning in the trial time. "This shall be with burning and fuel of fire."

The Abyss is beginning to send forth its armies, and Heaven sends forth its hosts. What for? The great battle of the Lord God Almighty is drawing near, the great day of burning conflict for all flesh, which shall burn as an oven—the great day of the Lord, the King of glory. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord, strong and mighty, He is the King of glory. The Lord of Hosts and of the armies of the glorified, He is the King of glory. This King of kings, the Lord of lords, the Son of man, is coming in His glory, and all His Holy angels with Him, in the last great conflict, to prevail over the hosts of evil.

This has its inward fulfilment in every man, at the great crisis in his own personal history, and his day of the Lord. But society is one, and is dealt with by God in its wonderful complex unity; and it also

has its day. Individuals, nations, societies, man as man, all have their day. In the great day they all synchronise : the day for which all other days were made ; the great crisis for which all other crises are but introductory and preparative ; the great Coming for which all other germinant comings of the Lord are but introductory stages. God's moments are the critical instants, and crises of Eternity.

We have only to look specially at the aspect of the great crisis, to discern how the great baptism will come. It is the letting loose, in the region of causes, of spiritual agencies, which are to bring on another great Crisis, and series of crises, which will hasten on the great consummation.

In Rev. xiv. we have a vision of *three Angels*. The Apocalypse is revealing there the crisis. The first Angel proclaims a Gospel of fear and judgment—the eternal Gospel. The hour is announced of the great Crisis : “ *Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment (crisis) is come.*” It is really a Gospel, or good news, when judgment comes. For judgment will but hasten on the final purposes of God's grace to man. The second Angel proclaims the fall of Babylon, which is the fall of bondage to secular power, to brute force, to human inventions, to luxury and falsity, to spiritual uncleanness and unfaithfulness.

The overthrow of that great city or system of things is by death, and mourning, and famine, and fire. The third Angel prophesies an immersion in fire for all worshippers of the beast and his image, and for those who have an open or even secret mark of the beast.

And then follow visions of a series of and culmination of judgments in the next five chapters, which are an amplification of this announcement of the everlasting Gospel of fear and judgment, ending in the binding of Satan for a season, his being loosed again after a protracted period, and then his immersion in the Lake; followed by the vision of the New Heavens and the New Earth, the New Jerusalem, the Bride of the Lamb, and the ever-flowing and free river of the water of life to every one who is athirst.

The *first Angel* gives the general announcement. The *second Angel* announces judgment on Babylon, which is secular and false ecclesiastical power. The *third* announces the judgment on the beast nature and worship. The vision, in an extended form, of the seven great judgments and last judgments on the beast nature and worship, is given in Rev. xv. and xvi., and the special vision of the judgment on Babylon is given in Chapter xvii.

God's revelation in the Apocalypse is full of the

revelation of spiritual agencies who, under the direct control of God and His commission, bring about these crises for hastening the work of God, and of making an utter end in righteousness. These revelations are of powers and times and seasons which are *not* under the control of the will of man, but of the will of God—the perfect, gracious, loving will of God. It is He who opens and shuts the Abyss. It is He who loosens and quickens heavenly forces, and sends His messengers, and sends forth and leads His armies. It is He who knows when the set time is come for great crises. *Evidences now abound, that we are at the beginning of special movements of spiritual forces, and of special judgments, which will be a great baptism in spiritual conflict.*

It will be a baptism of *all flesh* in the judgment and power and glory of the Lord, as manifest in the glorious coming of Christ, as the Word of God, with His pure saints, coming forth to the great battle which must end in the destruction of “flesh” as opposed to spirit. This is the great sacrifice which God makes. This is the great supper, the concluding meal before the great consummation, the great manifestation and marriage of the Bride.*

Every true baptism into the Spirit is a baptism

* Rev. xix. 17–21.

into death, complete death and burial. It is making an utter end. It was baptism into death in Christ's case. It is baptism into death in the case of the disciple of Christ. It can be no other in the *involuntary* baptism of obstinate and inveterate unbelievers. And society must in its units, and in its unity, have its baptism of death and judgment; death to the old state of things, life to the new.

The essential idea in baptism is death, including burial and resurrection. "Know ye not, that so many of you as were baptised into Christ were baptised into death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection."

The spiritual baptism of the believer is typified by immersion and emergence; death to the old life, resurrection to the new. It is immersion into conflict and suffering and death, though it is also into all that there is in the life and power and glory of God. Christ's baptism was not complete till He had passed through all His spiritual conflicts and all His suffering, His Gethsemane and the Cross, and exclaimed "*It is finished!*" and committed His spirit into the

Father's hands. Nay, it was necessary, in order to complete it, to descend into Hades, and rise from the dead to the resurrection life. It was the utter surrender to God of everything, even to life itself. In that He died, He died unto sin once, and in that He liveth, He liveth unto God.

We can discern how terrible Christ's baptism was, and how He must have been straitened until it was all accomplished, when we remember that it was on the ground of the personality of Jesus Christ, as the Son of Man, and the Son of God, and in His inward life, that there was fought the battle of the Ages. In the vast inward life of Christ, the Heir of the Ages, there was fought this battle with sin, with temptation, with death and hell. It was fought in the village Nazareth, in the wilderness, in the temple, in the streets of Jerusalem, in the villages, on Mount Olivet, in Gethsemane, on the Cross, in the grave. It was fought in the midst of all the contending forces of the universe. And He fought it out in the centre of all spiritual power, good and evil, that there might be to us the pledge and guarantee of the victory which should be accomplished in each of us and in society. Such a Christ in us can never be overcome. He has fought the battle for us, and He is now ready to fight out this battle at once in each individual life as faith

appropriates the power ; and He is fighting it out in the great body of humanity unconsciously to society, to be accomplished in His own due time.

But, by virtue of union with Him, there must be in every believer the same baptism, *in the degree in which Christ is formed within him*. The baptism of the soul is complete, when there is this complete baptism into Christ, into union with Him. We are baptised by the one Spirit into the one body, when we are baptised into the complete death of self, and the full realisation of perfect unity with Christ in His death, and in His unity with the body ; when the self life is merged into the union and communion with the body of Christ and His spiritual Church. It may be, as in Christ's own life, through long conflict and a fiery baptism ; but until this complete union takes place the believer must say, "*I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished !*"

And Christ is the great Baptiser. "*He shall baptise you in the Holy Ghost and fire.*" He baptises us in His own life. And if we are baptised into Christ, we are baptised into all included in the life of Christ, even into His sufferings and death. And if we be planted in the likeness of His death we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection. And if Christ baptises *all flesh*, for what purpose can it be but into

the same sacrificial life expressed in judgment and mercy ?

If a man will not enter into this sacrificial life of the Lamb, and thus become written in the Lamb's book of life as partaker of His life, his baptism will be in the fiery oven of judgment and involuntary sacrifice, which must destroy the adversary within him. There is revealed this second death baptism for the beast-nature, and the worshippers of the beast, and those marked with his name ; that is, for those who prefer the carnal Beast-nature to the Lamb-nature which is in Christ.

Ah, the terrible conflict and storm of fiery judgment which must come ! Nothing can hinder God's controversy with all the earth. Nothing can hinder the fierce and terrible conflict of the last burning day. Nothing can force back the fire-baptism of all society, which must come, sooner or later, in God's way and time. Who knows how near it may not be ? The surging forces are gathering to the flood which shall overwhelm and try. And God hasten it, for it must be to the glory of God, "*who quickeneth all things,*" and the good of poor man, who is as yet in the process of being redeemed and quickened.

IX.

THE LORD JESUS BEING REVEALED
IN FLAMING FIRE WITH HIS
HOLY ONES.

The sight of the Lamb is a judgment which condemns the Beast.

The overwhelming glory of the Second Advent will sweep away all refuges of lies, and destroy the covering over the faces of all people.

The coming of the Lord is in flaming glory, which cannot be denied, and cannot be overlooked or rejected.

And the full power of the Christ shall be in His saints, and the time of His coming shall be the time of their coming. They shall be glorified in Him and He in them, and they shall possess such power and wisdom and definite Divine glory that they shall judge the world.

CHAPTER IX.

THE LORD JESUS BEING REVEALED IN FLAMING FIRE WITH HIS HOLY ONES.

IN considering the subject of judgment, we have to remember that there are three possible meanings to the word judgment. It first means a standard set up by which to judge. The judgment was set. It then means the process of judging, or the act of judgment more or less prolonged; the Greek word is Crisis (κρίσις). It then means the sentence, the decision, the judgment expressed. This has also its separate Greek word.

With reference to the first meaning, the standard of judgment is *in Christ*, and can be in no other. He is the standard of God. He Himself is the judgment seat of Christ. He is declared to be the one by whom God will judge the world in righteousness: *that Man whom God hath appointed*. All that can be found in, and revealed in, that word Christ, the Life, the nature,

the power, the character, the work of Christ, Christ Himself, in His completeness, is set for the fall and for the rising again of many. It is impossible for such a being to come and live among men, and work and speak, without being a standard, a rule or judgment by which men are, in the sight of God and man, judged.

It is impossible for such a being to come and live among men, and work and speak, without being a standard, or rule, or judgment. A mere statement of law by word of mouth, or even by Jewish ritual, could never be enough. It needs *a living man*, a person, the Divine Man, the CHRIST OF GOD, THE ONLY BEGOTTEN. The sight of the Lamb is a judgment which condemns the Beast. The sight of the true and unselfish and sacrificing condemns the false and selfish. In His full manifestation, one word from Him is a sharp two-edged sword, one look is fire. His breath is like a stream of fire, His glance is as a flash of lightning. In the full revelation of His countenance, which is as the sun shining in its strength, even the pure John falls at His feet as dead. The life of a man stands before THE MAN CHRIST, and the man is immediately judged, whether he sees it or not; but in "*that day*" he will see it. Christ's very presence, and what He is, judges, ap-

proves, or condemns the man, according to the likeness or unlikeness of the man to Christ; according to His union, vital union with Christ, or his separation from Him. That is God's standard; CHRIST, nothing less than Christ, the true Son. The whole law is in Him. Any life short of that life, must come under condemnation. And unless Christ can be in a man, reproduced in him, he must be condemned. The reception of Christ, by faith in Him, is the starting-point of justification, and sanctification, and sonship. Nothing else can save a man but THE CHRIST in him, the hope of glory, as face answering face before the Judge, who is Himself the judgment — "*the judgment seat of Christ.*" He shall set up a standard, and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be. In the judgment, "*BEFORE HIM shall be gathered all nations.*" Into the manifestation of His presence shall all flesh be gathered.

And so, he that believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved, because such a faith is the reception of Christ as THE LIFE; for to as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to such as believed on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

That was true of Christ's first coming in humilia-

tion, in suffering and poverty, and as a sacrifice. "*Now is the judgment*" (*the Crisis*) "*of this world,*" said Christ. "*For judgment have I come into the world : that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind.*" In that statement is the deep wisdom of God. The true full sight of the pure Christ is sufficient, when the Divine power is fully put forth, to strike a man blind and powerless ; such a sight and such a blinding, when the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all His holy ones with Him, is sufficient to bring the soul where it has no more power to sin by rejection. Christ has really come into the world that all blindness should be taken away. For a time, those only who say they see, and see Him not, have their sin remaining in them. "If ye were blind," said Jesus, "ye would have no sin : but now ye say, We see ; therefore your sin remaineth." But when the blinding comes from the overwhelming glory as it will do in the day of the Lord's power, as it did in the case of Saul, who is a pattern of those who shall hereafter believe, it will indeed be a blessed blindness ; for the sinner will be brought into a condition where he will have no longer any heart to sin and reject, but only to cry out in penitent and willing submission, "Lord, what wouldst Thou have me to do ?"

While the process of judgment goes on it must be a

crisis (κρίσις) in the history of him to whom it comes ; and according to the state of the man will be the severity and searching fire needed, and the greater the dross the greater the loss in the burning trial. The coming of Christ was a judgment and crisis in the history of the Jews. It was a judgment and a crisis in the history of every individual man with whom Christ came specially into contact, as a personal visitation. Christ's coming was in a true sense also a judgment and a crisis to the whole world, as an initiation of judgment ; because to come to one part of the body of humanity, or to one part of the race, is to come virtually to the whole. If one member of the body is judged, the whole body is beginning to be judged ; and it is a pledge and guarantee that we shall all in due time appear before the judgment seat of Christ. Every one must thus give account of himself to God.

But it is the second coming of the Lord which is the greater crisis in the history of every man, and of all society. It is the coming of the Lord in flaming glory, which cannot be denied, and cannot be overlooked or rejected. The first coming was Christ coming alone, and in humiliation and suffering, and to a certain extent in a hidden way. The second coming will be with His mighty angels. He will bring His saints

with Him. He comes to be glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believe. The overwhelming glory of the Second Advent will sweep away all refuges of lies, and destroy the covering over the faces of all people. The manifestation will be a manifestation, in power, of Christ and the sons of God, as a reality incontestible.

Whatever special form this flaming glory may take, it will be the presence of the Lord in His glory, and the presence of His Saints in their purity, and power, and glory, showing forth the manifestation of Christ in them. “*Then shall the righteous shine forth in the kingdom of their Father.*” Then shall there be such an effulgence of spiritual life, and power, and glory, from the manifestation of Christ in His Saints, that they shall be seen to be glorified in the eyes of the hitherto unbelieving. The full power of the Christ shall be in His Saints. They shall possess such power and wisdom and definite Divine glory that they shall judge the world. “*Know ye not that the Saints shall judge the world?*” The prophet Malachi, by the Divine Spirit, represents it as though in this burning day of the Lord, which shall burn as an oven, the Holy ones should go forth and tread down wickedness as ashes under their feet, so great will be their power over evil.

All down the ages Christ has stood in Christendom

as the Judge, in the person of His believing ones, and wherever the Gospel has been preached. But too often He has remained unnoticed. In humiliation the Word has been manifested ; by weak preachers, by a feeble Church, by poor imperfect lives. The Gospel has been preached under difficulties. It has not had its full glory manifested. It has been under clouds, and in clouds. Suppose even as it was in Christ, it should be that outwardly, His Church should die by crucifixion, yet there shall be a resurrection and an ascension, and a Second Advent of the Church. The time is drawing near for its most glorious manifestation ; such manifestation of power in preaching of the Word, such a manifestation of Christ, as shall bring all nations before Him, without there being a possibility of their denying the Son of Man. They shall call Him Lord, even though it may be saying, “ Lord, when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, or naked, and visited not Thee?” The last judgment comes in Society when the Son of Man appears in His glory with and in His Holy ones, and summons all nations by this manifestation, and all flesh see it. And the last judgment to a soul comes to the inward life, when there is such a revelation of the glory of the Lord that it covers the whole earthly life, and all the flesh is irradiated by the glory.

Yes, when the Son of Man shall come in His glory, in the heart and lives of His own believing ones, and shall manifest Himself unto them as He does not unto the world, sitting on the throne of His glory, in their hearts and lives—for the throne of Christ is a living throne, it is a throne founded on the floods of living creatures, on men's hearts and lives; when He comes in His glory with His Holy ones, being glorified in His Saints, and admired in all them that believe, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory, as the King and Judge, and before Him shall be gathered all nations. Yes, and “Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord came with ten thousands of His Holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners spake against Him” (Jude 14). *“And the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee”* (Zech. xiv. 5).

Yes, when the Lord shall come manifestly, in His glory, and be glorified in His saints, and there shall be the full opening of internal vision in the saints, to see the King and His Holy ones in their glory in both worlds; when He shall take away the covering from the faces of all, and there shall be a startling concen-

tration of attention to Christ as Judge, then shall the fiery judgment come, and some shall go away into æonial life, and some into æonial *κολασις*, or purging. The beginning of that judgment shall be a flaming glory; as the lightning which lighteneth from one end of the Heaven to the other, so shall the flashing of conviction be and the coming of the Lord to them. The continuation in some souls shall be a terrible fiery trial. The flaming fire of the glory of the Lord, and the awful fire of the conviction and trial and crisis, however short or prolonged, shall try all the nations. *“For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword will the Lord plead with ALL FLESH: and the slain of the Lord shall be many”* (Isa. lxvi. 15). *“Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the Lord of Hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel”* (Isa. v. 24). *“Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; Mine Elect, in whom My soul delighteth. I have put My Spirit upon Him, and He shall bring forth THE CRISIS to the nations. . . . A bruised reed shall He not break, nor the smoking flax shall He quench. He shall bring forth*

THE CRISIS *to victory. He shall shine out and shall not be discouraged, till He have set judgment*" (THE CRISIS) "*in the earth, and in His name shall the nations trust*" (Isa. xlii. 1-4, Sept.).

The Crisis must come, the greatest of all crises, in every one and in all society, in which the glory of the Christ shall shine forth in flaming glory. But He will watch over the Crisis, and no poor bruised reed shall He break, nor expiring flax shall He quench, till the Crisis come forth to a victorious issue, and the nations shall trust in Him. Whatever fiery trial may try all the earth, the Judge Himself is the refiner, and His own Spirit the fire, and He sits watching the process, and watches till the pure result comes forth. That which is true for the individual soul is true for the nation, and true for the world, though the process and result may have to pass away, in continuation and consummation, into the invisible world. And there is not one truth for the individual and another for society, and one truth for time and another for eternity. All truth is eternal and universal. The one Lord is over all, and is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." The Lord is One, and His name One. He is no respecter of persons or of nations; and the same Lord is over all, and is rich in mercy to all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth. He will hear their cry and will save them.

The Book of the Apocalypse is a revelation of life in every individual, as well as of life in humanity as one body. The end of the Apocalypse, so full of judgment and great crises, is not blood and fire and smoke, and the Lake of Fire ; but the Lake of Fire, and the seven-fold judgments, are succeeded by the New Jerusalem, and the river of the water of life, and the free invitation. The Lake of Fire is succeeded by the river of the water of life. The beast is destroyed, and the false prophet, and the selfish ; and the Lamb is on the throne. The harlot and mother of abominations is brought to desolation and fire, and falsity is brought to ruin. Babylon is destroyed for ever. But the true Bride is manifested in spousal glory. To those who can understand the mystery it is clear, and full of light and joy.

It is no larger hope ; it is clearer than the largest hope. It is the unalterable revelation, and certainty of God, that “through the greatness of His power shall His enemies submit themselves unto Him.” “All the earth shall worship Him,” and shall sing praises unto the name of the Most High. God’s will shall be done on earth, even as it is done in Heaven, though every blade of grass were turned into an Apollyon. Conditional immortality, conditional salvation, conditional will of God, are all doctrines of the

imperfect, carnal, beast-nature, which will have to be burned up in the Lake of Fire.

Christ is the Anointed—anoointed with the same one Spirit with which He anoints, and in which He immerses *all flesh*. “No other anointing than that of love can be His who manifests the Father God; for God is love, and therefore has power to carry out His own will and pleasure; or, in other words, is omnipotent only in measure as He is the Beloved.”

“Not for controversy, but for truth’s sake, therefore, I declare my deep conviction, that any view of the omnipotence of God which presents that omnipotence as other than the omnipotence of the Beloved, prepares the way for the kingdom, not of the Father, but of the Beast. For any other omnipotence than that of the Beloved is of a nature such as can be seized by man, in the law of physical life, or in the law of the life of the Beast.”

“The hope of salvation, under a view of God which is satisfied with His power to crush all opposers, and to reduce all wickedness to torment, is in its essence identical with that survival of the fittest which is the law of the Bestial life; of which law the principles are opposed to those of the Spirit.” *

* “Omnipotence belongs only to the Beloved,” p. xx.

X.

BAPTISM IN THE LAKE OF FIRE.

Babylon's purgatory is a lie, but the furnace of God, and the Lake of Fire, are Divine certainties of terrible yet blessed significance and power.

There is no greater testing and torment for the selfish beast-nature in us than to be cast into the burning life of God, which will no longer allow a man to be a satisfied beast.

"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God ; for our God is a consuming fire."

"The Lord whose fire is in Zion, and His furnace in Jerusalem."

"His breath kindles Tophet."

"*I will consume thy filthiness out of thee. . . .* Because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore I will gather you . . . as they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace."

"And Death and Hades were cast into THE LAKE OF FIRE. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into THE LAKE OF FIRE."

CHAPTER X.

BAPTISM IN THE LAKE OF FIRE.

THE Lake of Fire is the fire of God's own Spirit in a special condition of intensely consuming and purifying activity and power. "His breath kindles Tophet." It is His own burning Spirit of life, and therefore of His intense love, in its terrific nature, and in energetic action. Who can realize, but those who have had a foretaste of it, what a terrific fire burns in God, into which He can plunge the soul, in its selfishness and miserable carnality, to baptise its life and conscience, and to burn up its beast-nature, and carnal death?

The Dives, down in Hades, is in pangs that he should ever have lived such a selfish, voluptuous, and luxurious life on earth, in the midst of all his prosperity, forgetting the wretched Lazarus. The terrible testing, searching trial (*βασανος*) is come for him. He is glad enough now to beg a favour of Lazarus through Abraham, and to confess that he is in burning

thirst. But he is at least beginning to feel, and to be thoughtful about others, and anxious that they should escape the same terrible torment, which is better than his late sensual indifference. *There is no greater testing and torment for the selfish beast-nature, than to be cast into the burning life of God, which will no longer allow a man to be a satisfied beast.*

Does THE CHRIST watch the effect of the fire? Does He sit as Lord of the touchstone (βασανος), Lord of the furnace, and of the Lake of Fire? Does He watch the seven last terrible judgments on the Beast-nature? (Rev. xvi.) Yes, surely. For the Lord, in calm and wonderful love, sends forth from His own Temple His white-robed, golden-girded angels, with golden bowls, as most precious, containing the sevenfold wrath of God; and the pouring out is preceded by the chorus on the sea of judgment, the song of the two dispensations, the song of Moses the servant of God and of the Lamb. All God's judgments are true and righteous altogether; more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than fine gold. For they are expressions of His love and mercy, even when most terrible.

The judgment on the beast-nature and self-hood is set in love; the seven plagues are let loose in love and righteousness; the fire of love is kindled in the Lake, in the riches of His grace. It is God's holy

breath of love, and consuming Spirit, which kindles the Lake, and fans it. It is the testing fire that tries the base metal, and makes inquisition and searching for the true metal. It is the proving fire which flames out from the love of God, from the innermost centre of the presence of God in the being of the man, searching the selfishness and hate of the man ; flaming from God's purity, burning the impurity ; flaming from the life of God, burning the land nigh unto cursing ; whose end is to be burned, and thus to be purged.

Why does God put anything or any one into such a terrible fire ? That we may suffer ? Well, if necessary, and if that is inseparable from the testing. Certainly to burn up and burn out the filthy dross of the beast-nature. Most assuredly so. And His own people, even His own elect, He casts into the fire when necessary ; and cleanses Jerusalem with the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning. “ *His furnace is in Jerusalem, and His fire in Mount Zion.*” And if such a judgment of burning begin at the house of God, what will the ungodly do ? Hear what God, by His prophet, says of His own elect : “ *I will consume thy filthiness out of thee. . . . Because ye are all become dross, behold, therefore I will gather you. . . . As they gather silver, and brass, and iron, and lead, and tin, into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt*

it; so will I gather you in Mine anger and in My fury, and I will leave you there, and melt you. Yea, I will gather you in the fire of My wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the Lord have poured out My fury upon you." Yes, the object is revealed. "*I will consume thy filthiness out of thee*" (Ezek. xxii.).

It is the tender Lamb, who does not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax, who has to do with it all. It is His wrath. It is the Lamb's righteousness which doth judge and make war. It is He who has given His most precious life for the sin of the world. It is His eyes which are a flame of fire. His Baptism is in the blood of His enemies. He dips Himself in their blood, their conflicts, their sins, in their death. In all their afflictions He is afflicted. Their blood dyes His vesture. It is out of His mouth that the sharp two-edged sword goes, with which He smites the nations, of whom He is King, and who shall come and worship before Him because His righteous judgments have been made manifest. It is He Himself who treads the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God. It is He alone who treads it. It is He who breathes out the breath of fire, and kindles Tophet. It is His own breath, or Spirit, which makes

the fire; and in all the burnings He walks amid the flames visibly or invisibly, in which He plunges fruitless trees and chaff, and burns up the beast-nature, and false prophet nature, and the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; in which He burns up the wicked: for all the wicked will He destroy. Well, as we are all found to be wicked, when God looks down from His Heaven, as wicked we must all be brought down into condemnation, and lie undone, and destroyed, and utterly searched out, and consumed, until He who cannot rest His eyes on iniquity, shall search and find no iniquity; that we may be presented every man perfect in Christ. "He hath concluded all under sin, that He might have mercy upon all." If we can receive it, He hath also included Jesus Christ. He was reckoned amongst transgressors. He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. The Lamb of God takes upon Himself our sin, and in all our suffering He suffers, that we may joy in all His joy. He groans in all our groans, that we may enter into the liberty of His glory as the sons of God. He walks in the furnace with the three youths and with all His redeemed ones, and with all who are in the process of being "redeemed through judgment."

The times of our ignorance in the past should suffice us to have thought that Christ only suffered for the elect, and in His elect. He is filling up now the measure of His sufferings in His Church ; yes, but also in the body of humanity for every man. He who is *everywhere*, is on the throne, and in the furnace, and in the innermost centre of every heart.

As sinners—yes, and as saints even—we need the baptism of blood and fire. “In Thy sight shall no man living be justified.” And as partakers with the Lamb we need His baptism. “Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink of, and to be baptised with the baptism wherewith I am baptised ?” “Every man shall be salted with fire, even as every sacrifice is salted with salt.”

But shall we all be baptised in this lake of fire ? No ; not as *the lake* of fire, and *second* death, unless the beast-nature remain in us. But yet all must be baptised in the fire of God’s own life of intense searching and conflict and power, and be permeated with Divine heat. It is utterly impossible that any one should escape that. Blessed is he that has his baptism in the death of Christ now in this present life, and in the fellowship of suffering with Him, and thus has his name written in the Lamb’s book of life : for “if so be that we suffer with Him, we shall be also glorified

together with Him." "Blessed is he that hath part in the *first* resurrection, for on such the *second death* hath no power." "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." "And Death and Hades delivered up the dead that were in them, and they were judged every man according to their works. And Death and Hades were cast into the Lake of Fire. This is the second death. *And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*"

It really matters little to the man who has been divinely rid of the beast-nature, and has no false prophet dwelling in him, and who is written in the Lamb's book of life, where he may be placed; he can dwell in the most intense life of God, amid everlasting burnings. He can make his bed in Hell, and find the presence of God there.

But he who has anything remaining in him of the beast-nature, and false word, and death, must with certainty be cast into the lake; and blessed be God that He does make thorough work and an utter end of these. "Praise Him, ye dragons and all deeps, fire and hail, snow and vapour, stormy wind fulfilling His word. Praise Him, ye lakes of fire, and furnaces of the refiner and of judgment. Praise Him, all pain and suffering; praise Him, ye eternal burnings."

Truly there is a deep and divinely mystic sense in which inwardly all these mysteries have their fulfilment in a man, in his inward life; and it is true that all in a man's life that has not had part in the first resurrection, must be cast into this lake of fire for the final consumption of the beast-nature and death.

The second death is the consumption of anything, and everything, and every one, not written in the book of life. The second death is the fire of God, burning to the lowest Hades. The only thing which can live in it is God and all who have the pure life of God in them; the Lamb of God and all who have the life of the Lamb, and are one with Him. There is but one Eternal Life, and this life is in His Son. Babylon, and the beast, and the deceiver, and falsity are not everlasting, and they shall be destroyed, though their smoke goeth up to the ages of the ages. The last enemy that destroys everything else, itself shall be destroyed. Then cometh the end, when the Son shall deliver up the kingdom unto the Father, and God shall be *All*, and *in All*.

The everlasting truth is that, having started from high origin in Him, God, our loving and almighty Father, in sweet love, means to bring us all into conscious nearness and communion with Himself in

the unity of His Divine nature. We are near Him now; perhaps we do not know it. We are in Him and He in us even now; but we do not know it while sin blinds our eyes and hardens our lower consciousness, and thickens the great veil which hides Him from us, who is within us and without us, until we are prepared for the Beatific vision and presence. But as we become prepared, we find the veil thins away, or becomes rent, or burns away, and we can stand the burning presence and pass through the fierce fire, and if necessary, live in the light of His glory. Yes, the nearer we are brought to the realised presence of God, unless we are of like nature, the more we experience Him to be a *Consuming Fire*.

Some one has lately well said: "If we could get close to the sun we should be infallibly burnt up, unless we became more like it, more one with it in nature as we approached nearer to it. If one could respond so perfectly to the sun action as to become a little fragment of sun oneself, then one could sail right into its heart, and there find not a crucible or a sepulchre, but a home." So, if we could become realised partakers of His Divine nature who is a consuming fire, then we could enter right into His Heart, and there find not a crucible but a home. That is our salvation alone to become conscious

partakers of His Divine nature in sonship, that we may be with Him and behold His glory.

“Is Hell the absence of the water of life, with the presence of the burning of love? And must love always burn, producing more and more that thirst for life-water which here the sinner has felt not, until all that defiles has been burnt away, and life as water comes with it to quicken and nourish?”

“Why do we talk and write as if there were two kinds of fire, instead of two kinds of material on which fire acts? Why do we think of the fire of Hell as the uttermost evil (whereas, surely, it is the one only blessed, pure thing in that horrible region, the one only form of God which the clingers to evil can receive), and the fire of the Holy Spirit, the fire which our Lord came to send on earth, the ardent, burning love of God, as a good thing? Are they not one and the same; the response, that which fire calls out, only varying?”

“In the wilful, uncleansed sinner *the fire of God* must call forth weeping, wailing, and gnashing. Well for him that it does so, for it proves he is not hopelessly dead. Deadness weeps not, wails not, gnashes no teeth. And it must call forth fetid smoke as it fastens on and burns up the cherished evil and foulness! And in the unwilling sinner, fettered by

self, yet longing to love, fire must call forth the answering flame, leaping up on the altar of the heart when touched with a living 'coal' from the heavenly altar, and drawn, lifted up, kindled, 'inflamed' by the vision of Loving Holiness." *

* These last quotations are from "Links and Clues" (Macmillan).

XI.

SUMMARY.

“He hath ascended up far above all Heavens, that He might fill ALL THINGS.”

This filling ALL THINGS with Christ, and by Christ, and for Christ, is the baptism in the Holy Spirit and Fire.

And every Spirit in the redeemed Church of God, as the union is perfected between the spirit of the believer and the glorified Christ, becomes a potent living factor in the glorified life of Heaven descending from above, until Heaven presses down in Christ and His own, in irresistible power and unity, and floods the earth with quickening glory.

Heaven grows within, till the outburst of its Pentecostal power is irresistible and most glorious.

It is one of God's revealed principles of action, in the present order of things, to work out His purposes of grace and salvation, through apparent failure and through judgments even to death, antecedent to deliverance.

CHAPTER XI.

SUMMARY.

For the sake of emphasis and for gathering up a few points: What, then, is the approaching Fire-Baptism? It is nothing less than the baptism of every soul of man, and of all things connected with man, including the very Heavens and Earth, and all that are in them, in the Holy Spirit and Fire, as the consummation of the Divine order and purpose of God. It is the baptism of *all things* in the Holy Spirit which proceeds from the ascended Christ, who has now entered into glorified union as the Son of Man with God the Father, the source of all love and life and power, and who has ascended, in this glorified union, higher than all Heavens, for this very purpose, THAT HE MIGHT FILL ALL THINGS. This filling all things with Christ, and by Christ, and for Christ, is the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire. Truly it is not an instantaneous process, for it has been going on for eighteen centuries,

yet at present in a hidden way; for the Kingdom of Heaven cometh not with observation.

This descending Spirit of life and power, which is filling and about to fill, *fully and manifestly*, all things, proceeds from the Father, flowing through and from the ascended Christ, who is now descending *with all those who are one with Him in Spirit*. For every spirit in the redeemed Church, as the union is perfected between the spirit of the believer and the glorified Christ, becomes a potent living factor in the glorified power of Heaven descending from above, until Heaven presses down in Christ and His own, in irresistible power and unity, and floods the earth with quickening glory. Lo, He comes, in living clouds of glorified saints, and every eye shall see Him! The kingdom is yet to come with observation, as lightning lighteneth from one part of the Heaven to the other.

The full power of the Spirit of God, *coming through Christ and His Church as one*, is an increasing and accumulating power. It must go on till all things are manifestly delivered unto Christ by the Father. Seeing that unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, "*of the increase of His kingdom and government there shall be no end.*" Speaking relatively, the glorified kingdom of Christ grows in power as the number of the redeemed, entering into glorified union with

Christ, increases. Heaven grows till the outburst of its Pentecostal power shall be irresistible and most glorious.

This is the true Pentecost, the pressing down of the glorified life of Heaven upon and into man; the purpose of which is fulness of life ultimately in ALL THINGS, and certainly not death, for that last enemy and stronghold is to be destroyed. As the visitation of glorified life by Christ comes to the individual, or through individuals to society, its ultimate purpose must be life, not death; although, because it has to do with sin and sinners, it will be, *wherever necessary*, in the exercise of judgment, through such manifestations that there shall be weeping and wailing, and cries, "*Men and brethren, what shall we do?*" or through utter breaking down and searching judgment either here or elsewhere; or through, if necessary, the terrible Lake of Fire, *the second death*. It cannot *but* be that the Holy Spirit, coming into contact with the rebellious and unholy spirit in man, must burn and try and judge, and bring through a terrible ordeal and must conquer finally. The greater the resistance and unlikeness in those with whom it strives, the greater the shattering and rending and dissolution, and the fiercer the fire of conflict and suffering.

In this dispensation, some meet the visitation of

the Spirit and Fire, as the flower opens to the light of Heaven; some as the Jews met their first Pentecost, some of whom mocked and ascribed it to new wine, others were broken down with cries, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" and were brought to the life of faith and fulness of joy in the Holy Ghost. Those that gladly received the Word were baptised in water and in the Spirit, and were added to the Church. Others went their way in unbelief to a yet more fiery baptism, which they could not possibly escape. For through the greatness of the power and life of God, and the irresistible grace of His Spirit, coming through judgment, drawing forth strong desire after God, His enemies shall submit themselves unto Him, in His own due time, and all the earth shall worship Him. The day of the Lord, for each soul, is *the day of the Almighty God*, in His power over that soul; and if for a time God *appears* to be resisted—for "*who has really resisted His will?*"—the time of visitation shall only return in overwhelming power and in accumulated judgment and grace. And so with the day of the Almighty with respect to society—it must be with irresistible judgment.

The Lord Jesus Christ, in the ever-active energy of His love, is now continually baptising individual souls, in the Holy Ghost and Fire, in the due time of their

readiness ; the baptism manifesting itself in different ways, according to their condition and His need of their service. And because Christ is always the Coming One, and is always coming to fill all things, He is always the Baptiser. The great crisis, however, of the dispensation has not yet arrived, for as there is a second Advent of the Lord in glory, so there will be a great second Pentecost, which will accompany that advent of glory to the world. It is the Advent of the Lord in the glory of the Holy Ghost.

Though the Holy Ghost is always present as the quickening Spirit, and always working, whether consciously to man or unconsciously, yet in society there is still this great and accumulating and irresistible baptism approaching as the great crisis of the dispensation. And everything betokens that we are rapidly approaching such a special movement in society. This approaching baptism of society in the Holy Spirit and Fire is the special inflow of Divine spiritual forces and life into society according to its special need as the end of the age is approaching : at first in ways which seem to be gradual and capable of being resisted, but finally as an overwhelming crisis of judgment and power.

It is one of God's revealed principles of action in the present order of things to work through apparent

failure, and through judgments even to death. In all the great crises of the world's history there have been these apparent failures, till the outburst of the Divine forces has been overwhelming, and God has brought about His crisis and then raised the world to higher blessing. The world grew worse and worse till the flood came, and then Divine events, acting through physical agents, irresistibly swept over the people. The irresistible carrying away of Israel into Babylon, in the working out of Divine judgment, followed a gradual decadence of spiritual life and many warnings. The Jews, after the revival on the return from captivity, grew worse and worse again, till the first Advent of Christ, when events were quickened remarkably, and the terrible and irresistible destruction of Jerusalem came as a Divine event ending the Jewish age. Christ foretells that, before His coming again, the tares will ripen; that it will be as in the days of Noah, faith will not be found, the people will be unsuspecting and sensual; that it will be as in the days of Lot—"even thus will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed." He foretells that iniquity will abound, that there will be many evils, wars, kingdom against kingdom, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, persecution, hatred, betrayal, offences, false prophets, wide deception, and great tribulation, such as was not since

the beginning of the world to this time, nor ever shall be. The Apostle Paul also prophesies by the Spirit that in the latter days there shall be a great falling away, departure from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons, the speaking of lies in hypocrisy, seared consciences, marriage forbidden, bidding to abstain from meats.

And it must needs be that evil should do its worst before the great crisis, and develop its utmost resources, that the power of the Lord, and His sufficiency to meet every form and degree of evil, may be manifested. The man of sin is to be revealed before the great Advent of the Lord in glory shall destroy him—not necessarily an individual man, but the man of sin in the body of humanity, the revelation of sin in its full development and manhood. It is revealed in the Apocalypse, that Babylon will grow prosperous in wonderful luxury and unfaithfulness, till the hour of its sudden overthrow with the cities of the nations. I speak of manifestations and powers of the Babylonian principle embodied in modern forms. The Beast has its day and development and extraordinary despotic success, till its judgment comes; and death and hell are busy, till the Lake of Fire. But there is no hesitation as to the final power being on the side of God, and of deliverance when He shall be All and in All.

The great Fire-Baptism, which shall try all the world, will be the inworking and outworking and outburst of the Spirit and life of God in society, in great and overwhelming power for manifestly righteous and merciful purposes, for the destruction of that which can be and must be destroyed; for the quickening of true life, and for lifting man into higher conditions.

The first flood was, in the expression of Divine judgment against lawlessness, for the sweeping away of evil-doers from conditions where they could sin easily, into the unseen state where they could be specially restrained, and dealt with more graciously by God, and for the regeneration of the earth in type and in society; for in the Divine order, except the earth, as well as man, be born of water and of the Spirit, it cannot enter into the kingdom of the new heavens and the new earth. The first Advent of the Lord was in the love of God, for the destruction of the Jewish dispensation, and the quickening of a new one. The next culmination of judgment will be the judgment on Christendom and the Gentiles, and the quickening of a new order of things. The external Church will be permeated by the fire of judgment for the separation of the precious from the vile, and judgment must begin at the House of God. And the Spirit and Fire deluge shall also be for the baptism of

society into God as the consuming fire, to burn and to destroy the evil, the dross and chaff, and yet also to quicken any life which can possibly be purified and remain.

The first Pentecost of the Holy Ghost took place when the personal Jesus had entered through all earthly stages and human progress, into perfect union with the Divine Father, ascending higher than all heavens, and so being glorified ; for while Jesus was on earth “ *the Holy Ghost was not yet, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.*” But when He became glorified, Christ sent forth abundantly the glorified Spirit of Father and Son, which was just the Spirit to effect the special work which was needed in man : the restoration of man, and the filling all things with the Spirit of glorified humanity in God.

Just so ; as the Christ-life in society, the spiritual Church of the Firstborn, approaches its glorification, through the ascent of the faithful in Christ Jesus, into perfect union with the Father, through perfected union with His Son, then will the greatest of all Pentecosts come. It will be nothing less than the long-awaited manifestation of the sons of God ; and through *the Holy Spirit and Fire in Christ and His Church*, as the power of the Father, a marvellously quickening Spirit shall flow forth to quicken the yet unsaved world and

to fill all things. It is suffering time now, and the time of humiliation and hindered power ; but *if so be that we suffer with Christ, we shall be also glorified together.* “*For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*”

In God's providence and power the rapidity of movement everywhere betokens, and is hastening on, the great Day of the Lord. And forces are already beginning to work which show that existing institutions are like old bottles, which must burst with the new wine of the Spirit ; and thus is revealed the beginning of judgment and destruction. The day of the Lord must come through the breaking down of old forms and establishments and national arrangements, through great upheavals in society, through social dislocations, through the outburst of social volcanic forces, and through social earthquakes ; through the judgment-ruin which extravagance, and fashion, and hurry to be rich entail ; through the failure of ambitious schemes, through the collapse of external Churches and sects, through wild efforts to assume powers which shall be a substitute for providence, through a denial of God, and of the Divine sonship of regenerated humanity ; through fearful materialism and the denial of Spirit, through

terrible superstition, through wild spiritism, through all sorts of gigantic evils which will assume lawlessness, through famine of the Word, through corruptions and darkness and scorching heat, through perplexity and ruin and pain, through conflict and vehement desire for relief. For the Lord God by His Spirit, in dealing with a corrupt state of society, stirs up antagonisms and evokes evil, as well as awakens new life. It is impossible to bring out more evil out of the heart of society or out of anything than is already in it. And, therefore, to bring evil out into manifestation is not necessarily to increase it; and to allow the full revelation of the man of sin, or to bring it out to view, or to bring about tremendous ruin, by allowing full sway for a time to the forces of evil, is simply the quickest way to the destruction of evil, by bringing it to the light, and preparing the way for the destruction of evil by the brightness of the coming of the Lord of light and life.

And the Lord will mightily and lovingly come in all these visitations of judgment, and His baptism of the nations in the Spirit and Fire shall be a fiery trial to all the world, and God will thus plead with all flesh. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son"—the Lamb of God and the Baptiser in

the Holy Ghost—"that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life." And in giving His Son He gave the certainty of the bearing away of the sin of the world, and the certainty of its baptism in the Holy Ghost and Fire.

XII.

“BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY.”

The Great Crisis in society has already commenced, which in its progress will include the letting loose of specially disintegrating and destructive forces as a manifestation of Divine judgment, and the outburst of resurrection and transfiguration power.

“The world is astir, the Church is anxious. All things are being searched, shaken, overturned, prior to reconstruction. Both the Churches and the kingdoms of the world are receiving notice that their tenure is running out, and that they are about to be supplanted, not by two clashing, discordant forms of society, but by the harmony of ‘the Kingdom.’ Yea, let it come. Our disorders, and the keenness of competitive strife, ecclesiastical, and general dismay, the woes of the world, as much as the prayers of the devout, are crying, Yea, let it come. The earnestness of the cry denotes the nearness of the Coming.”—*Morgenröthe*.

How long shall it take the Lord God Almighty, when He arises to shake terribly the Earth and Heaven yet once more, to sweep away the refuges of lies, to destroy the veil over all faces, to send the rushing mighty breath of His Spirit through all the structures of society, and to kindle a fire which shall penetrate and burn to the lowest depths?

CHAPTER XII.

“BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY.”

THE measured steps of God, in the march of events, ever make sure progress ; for God never goes backward, and when He seems most to be going back, He is taking a greater step forward. Slowly, surely, and grandly, as befits His nature, and the wonderful work He has to do, the Lord God Almighty moves on in the redemption of Man, and the development of the Ages.

We who believe in the unerring indications of revelation, and in the signs of the times, when read in harmony with the Spirit, believe that *the climax of this dispensation is very near*, when the long-suffering of God, specially manifested during this age, and when the powers which have begun to work in measure shall culminate in *The Great Crisis*, and a new order of events shall take place. The great crisis will include much, and may occupy a prolonged period ; it will

include the letting loose of specially disintegrating and destructive forces, the exertion of resurrection-power, the manifestation of Divine judgment, separation, shame and glory; and finally, the manifestation of the new order will include the restitution of all things, promised by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began.

The time seems to some to tarry long, but it must and will come, and the day of the crisis draws very near. The dispensation of long-suffering, and of gentler and more gradual operation, is prolonged only until the number is complete of those who, freely in faith, give God power over that which is in them and by them, by the reception into their whole being of the Christ-life. When once that number is complete, then the returning Christ, in union with these elect souls, shall be manifested in marvellous powers of judgment, and of salvation, and glory. He shall be unmistakably manifested in His glory, and shall surprise those who have rejected Him, and be known as pouring out, by His angels, the judgments which vindicate His righteousness before all despisers, all scoffers, all mockers; and He shall rise up specially as the brother of the poor and afflicted, the imprisoned, and the sick, and needy, and shall cause all who rejected Him in His subjection to ache with conviction of sin, to burn with

conviction of righteousness, to thirst in the fires of judgment, and to cry out for the living God.*

It matters little to us just now in what special way as to detail these judgments shall take place, or in what exact order, or at what exact moment they may come. We can trust God for His own Divine method and order. And it matters little whether the dividing line between the old order and the new shall be sharp or gradual. It is the certainty of the fact which is all-important. Yet the revelation of Jesus Christ in the Apocalypse is full of indication both as to order and method. The GREAT CRISIS will come, must come. Events are all hastening up to it. And the work of Christ must be completed, in filling all things, and delivering up the kingdom to the Father.

This is not the place or time to speak in detail of the seven last plagues, the judgments of God, which hasten on the end, or of "*the manifestation of the sons of God,*" which will be one of the early and certain events of the close of this dispensation, and by whom a glorious work will be accomplished in the deliverance of the creation. About both these subjects I hope to speak at another time, if the way should be open. It is sufficient just now that we should discern the principle that God, being no respecter of persons,

* Substance of paragraph, "Parables of Judgment."

deals with all; that He deals not only with the individual separately, but with society as a whole; that He deals not only with unbelievers, but with believers also in judgment; that He deals not only with the nations as nations, but with His Church as a body of believing ones known to Him. Judgment, it is revealed, must first begin at the House of God, in smiting asunder the false and true, in uncovering the hypocrite and manifesting the real. And it is sufficient to discern that the time of special judgment, in the outpouring of the Spirit and fire, is rapidly approaching.

Signs are not wanting that we are close on the edge of a series of stupendous events, which will be produced by the direct power of the Spirit of God, acting specially, and first of all, on believers, who are filled with the Spirit; and which will be seen on the one hand in the evolution of the powers of regenerate man, the quickening of the mortal bodies of believers, transfiguring them, and raising them above the power of death, while opening all their spiritual faculties as yet lying hid; and on the other hand will be seen in judgment on the professing Church, and penal smiting which shall wither pretentious powers and claims in ecclesiastical and political regions; which will be seen also in visitations on the powers of scepticism, infidelity, covetousness, superstition, and

violence ; and seen in the utter confusion and downfall of all which can be rightly considered as included in the falsity of Babylon. The Spirit and Fire of God will both destroy and quicken, will both demolish and transfigure, according to the character of those upon whom the action of the Spirit takes place.

It is revealed that this twofold work will take place at the end of the age—a work both of punishment and reward, antecedent to further work in a new dispensation, the times of restitution.* Separation will be made between the false and the true, between tares and wheat, between righteous and unrighteous, between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not, between the faithful and unfaithful servants, the merciful and unmerciful nations, and between light-bearers who have oil in their vessels and those who have none, and so are ready or unready to enter into the marriage joy of their Lord.

It is revealed that at this time there will be shame and vexation and tears on the one hand, and on the other the shining forth of the righteous as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, and an entering into the joy of the Lord.

It is revealed that fire will accompany the crisis ; no other word would adequately represent the trial and

* Acts iii. 19-21.

searching of love. The tares will be subjected to the fire as well as the chaff and the fruitless trees. The day of the Lord shall burn as an oven; and what if some be as stubble, and some as gold tried in the fire; and what if it may be found that both tares and wheat will have to be separated in some cases in one and the same heart, and that the time of separation shall be a time of painful consuming? A great dispensational testing must take place, and a great dispensational entering into life. And every man's work, as well as himself, shall be tried in the fire. And though his work may suffer loss, yet shall he be saved, though as by fire.

It is revealed, that when the Lord Jesus shall be unveiled from Heaven with His mighty angels, two effects will be produced: power of glory will go forth from the presence of the Lord sufficient on the one hand to destroy disobedience; and, on the other hand, power of indwelling glory will be revealed sufficient to transfigure the saints of the Most High God, by the manifestation of the Christ within, now coming forth into striking glory outwardly.

It is exceedingly important, then, to recognise that not only a crisis will assuredly come, but that it will be a dividing time—a time of painful judgment for the inexcusable unbeliever, and even of fire, but *a time of*

the outbursting of inconceivable splendour and power of life for the believer who is established in righteousness; a time of magnificent and terrific convulsion and searching for all. For yet once more, He who is a consuming fire shall shake not the earth only, but also Heaven.

Nothing is plainer than this revelation—that at the great Crisis, when evil is to be fully manifested, and decisively judged, *a new order of glory will appear, in which the sons of God will take their position of power and judgment, and of rule, and of delivering might. “Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?”* In fact, the manifested glory will judge the dishonour, light will judge darkness, righteousness and purity will judge unrighteousness and impurity. It will be the coming in glory of the Son of Man with His holy ones, the sons of God, which will be a marvellous judgment itself. The manifestation of an exceeding splendour of the righteous would itself be a judgment on the unrighteous, who were found to have no splendour at all: “found naked.”

In the new order, instead of there being a rule of mere political expediency and material force, there shall be a rule of righteousness. The saints of the Most High hitherto have not risen to the dominion, because they have been scarcely matured enough in

power ; they have not been perfected. But the time of manifestation will be the time of perfection and maturity of power, perfection of ability, perfection of all qualities and states necessary for reigning with Christ. Up to the present time, believers as such, men of God, saints of the Most High, have not ruled the world in righteousness and holiness. Kings and emperors, prime ministers and statesmen, have not been chosen by virtue of purity and holiness of life, and because divinely gifted with the Spirit. Men have not been chosen for high office in society on the principle "*Choose ye out men full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, that they may be set over these matters,*" because society has not been recognised as being on a sufficiently spiritual basis to choose such men. But then, such shall be the Divine force and fulness of the Spirit in the sons of God coming in their glory, that they shall reign whose right it is to reign. For He who is King of kings shall come in His glory, and all His holy ones with Him, and then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory. And when the righteous shall shine forth as the sun, and purity and holiness shall take their proper position, the sons of God, without rebuke, shall rule, and judge, and bless with unmistakable power and efficiency.

We do well to expect, then, in the approaching end

of the age, amid all the process of the Crisis, amid the shaking, and overturning, and searching, and fiery trial, that those who are ready will meet this Crisis, with joy and unharmed, and shall receive a kingdom which shall not be moved. By the power of the marvellous Pentecost which shall come upon them, the men of God, who, by virtue of the Christ formed within them the hope of glory, may really be called sons of God and are so, shall be filled with Divine fulness and glory, and shall be raised to such a position of power and glory that they shall be possessors of the *Crown of Life*. Life and power such as have never been experienced before shall be their portion and crown.

This manifestation of the sons of God will be sufficient in itself to introduce quite a new era into the history of the universe; “*for even the creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God.*” There shall come into manifestation such a marvellous distinction between the truly begotten of God and the merely external professor, and merely ecclesiastical and pretentious devotee, that the manifestation of the sons of God shall be seen in their having the veil taken away from between the seen and the unseen worlds. Their very exaltation of powers, and enlarged faculties, shall be a distinguishing mark. They, being filled with the Spirit, walking

in the Spirit, being led of the Spirit, and being in the Spirit on the Lord's day of His power, shall see the vision of God and the spiritual world, which only those whose eyes are opened in the Spirit can see. The spirit-world shall become objective to them, and appear as real and be more real than this.

They shall talk as John talked with angelic beings, and hear angelic songs, and enter Heaven's opened door, and hold communion with living saints who walk in white, and be at home in the New Jerusalem, and find that the seven promises to those who overcome are theirs in fulfilment. They shall eat of the tree in the midst, not of the old Paradise of earth, but of the Paradise of God. They shall not be hurt of the *Second Death*. They shall eat of the hidden manna, and possess the white stone. They shall receive the iron sceptre and rule over the nations, and have the morning star. They shall be clothed in the pure white raiment, and being written in the Lamb's book of life, shall be confessed by the Lamb before the Father, and before His angels. They shall be fire-pillars in the Temple of God, and in letters of glorious light have the threefold name. Yes, and in the final overcoming they shall sit with Christ in His throne, even as He overcame and is set down with the Father in His Throne. All this shall be fulfilled inwardly, and therefore outwardly.

What is there to hinder a new Tabor in which the sons of God shall be transfigured? Nothing but the unwillingness of man to receive the fulness of that Divine life, which in its own due time will transfigure the very body and render it as the very body of Christ, of whom it is said, "He was transfigured before them, and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light." But to this end we must be perfectly at the will of the Father, even as He was. We must allow the Christ to be fully formed within us, the hope of glory. And if so be that the Spirit of Him that transfigured Christ dwell in us, the Spirit shall also transfigure our mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in us. *The Christ-life must attain transfiguration.*

Ah! in our ignorance and unbelief it seems as though it might take infinite ages to bring about such a state of things. But things which are impossible to man are possible with God. It took rather more than thirty years—according to human reckoning—to bring Christ from the concept of the Word, to the transfigured Christ on Tabor, and the ascending Christ at Bethany.

It took a few years only to bring Peter, James, and John from simple fishermen into conditions in which they could see their transfigured Lord. It took com-

paratively a *few* years longer to open the faculties of the spirit of John in such fulness that he could talk with angels and enter Heaven, and see the throne, and talk with the ascended Christ, and behold His glory, and have the revelation of the destiny of the world unrolled before him, and see the kingdom of God coming in power.

How long shall it take the Lord God Almighty, when He arises to shake terribly the earth and Heaven yet once more, to sweep away the refuges of lies, and destroy the veil over all faces, and send the rushing mighty breath of His Spirit through all the structures of society, and kindle a fire which shall penetrate and burn to the lowest depths? How long does it take a volcano to burst forth when the due time is come to manifest its hidden fires? How long will it take the last trumpet to sound and the dead to hear, and the vibration of its quickening sound to reach the lowest Hades, and to call forth *all* that are in their graves? How long?

One moment before the first Advent, the birth of Christ, though God's preparations had been going on for ages, the general world was quite in ignorance of the nearness of the Advent, and gross darkness covered the people. Another moment, and suddenly there was a bright light from Heaven around the simple shep-

herds, on the plains of Bethlehem, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and suddenly there was the pealing of Heavenly music, and the Host of Heaven sang at the Birth of the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world.

One moment, and the disciples were waiting in stillness and timidity in the upper room ; another moment, and a mighty rushing wind filled all the house where they were sitting, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and tongues of fire sat upon each of them.

One moment before, and Stephen saw nothing but the faces of his judges ; another moment, and being filled with the Spirit, he looked up with face transfigured with glory as if he had been an angel, and saw Heaven opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of the Father.

One moment before, and Saul was unsuspecting, yet possibly brooding much, while riding on his way to Damascus ; when, in another moment, there suddenly shone round him a light brighter than the midday sun, and the voice of Christ spoke to him, and henceforth his whole being was changed.

What is there to forbid one moment of ominous quietness, events seem to go on as usual, another moment, and it is the crack of doom ; the Crisis has arrived, the due time of God's manifestation has

arrived, the earth is shaken, society is moved, the heavens also are shaken, and all things are wrapped in the fire of His manifested presence and decisive working. I know such a crisis can take place in the inward world.

But the question is not so much the suddenness and the compression of the working of God into the smallest possible space of time, as the certainty that it must come, and that the climax may come with a rushing mighty force, and lift believers into a higher region of spiritual life and power, and open their faculties, and quite change the aspect of things, and in agreement with indications in Scripture will so come. "The New Age at its dawn is here." "And most assuredly we shall not trust those readers of the signs of the times who fail to see that the lightning of a Grand Royal Coming is flashing from end to end of our world."

Events do come in order. All are not changed in the same moment necessarily. Every man in his own order will be changed. Christ the firstfruits has been changed and glorified, afterward they that are Christ's, *at His coming*. The antecedent change with respect to the truly believing and waiting souls may occur at any moment, in one or more, or in a vast number, as they reach their readiness for it. But this change,

before it passes upon *all flesh* to completeness, may occupy a protracted period, and pass through a zone of striking judgments ; but the rushing rapidity of events is to be expected when the angels seen by the seer (Rev. xv.) come forth in procession from the Temple, with the golden bowls of the last plagues upon the creature and the beast.

To those who are listening, the cry of intense yearning for the irresistible coming of the Lord in flaming power, gathers in force from wearied hearts, crying out for the living God. Hearts are sick with sin and social evils, and the sight of widespread greed and selfishness ; and because iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold. Frivolity and satiated luxury, and hungry poverty, are side by side ; and slow and intense suffering from weak bodies and sensitive nerves, and hard toil under privations from social inequalities and despotisms, pain loving hearts, who realise their position in the body of humanity and believe in the power of God. Believing men and women may be excused if they are longing for the burning up of death and sin by the outburst of the fire of the immanent God, the burning up of the old order by a quickened spirit of life and righteousness. What if judgments shall be abroad in the earth, and tremendous conflicts introduce such a state of things, if that is the Divine order and

really effective? Such judgments even would be hailed as advancing means of blessing, for when the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth, we are told, the nations will learn righteousness; and Zion shall be redeemed with judgment. All the infinite possibilities are with God, and He will show that they are when He rises up in the great manifestation to judge the earth in righteousness and the people with His truth.

Ναὶ ἔρχομαι ταχύ. Ἀμήν.

Ναὶ, ἔρχου, κύριε Ἰησοῦ.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

A. THE FIRE PRINCIPLE.

IN a remarkable work, published after this book was written, entitled *The Book of the Age for the Children of the Age*,* much confirmation is given to what I have advanced as to the Fire of God as about to bathe the heavens and earth and all humanity. I may be allowed to give the following extracts from a chapter on "The Fire Principle:"—

"One Presence, One Principle, is the sole cause of activity in every centre, the One Source of Motion and Life, Light and Heat. If you could suppose God to draw into Himself the Fire of His Life, in that moment every sun would be a darkness, every motion would cease, life everywhere be extinct, and the whole universe relapse into its own eternal cold and death. God is God. The Fire of His Life is 'the All in All.'"

"Through the action of this sweet Central Fire, the atmosphere of our globe has been undergoing a slow process of change, and every organism in the planet, including of course the human body, is being secretly qualified by its transmuting power. In the imperceptible

* "*Morgenröthe*," by John Pulsford (Hamilton).

action and the unhasting process of the Divine Fire, it behoves us to recognise the cause and law of the great changes ultimately to be wrought in the planet and its elements."

"‘The Spirit of His mouth’ or ‘the Sword of His mouth’ with which it is said He will ultimately ‘smite the nations’ and ‘destroy the wicked,’ is clearly no other than the intense atmosphere of His Love destined to be embodied in the atmosphere of our world."

"So intensely vital and sweet is the Holy Fire and Love-Breath of the Lord, that the great Crisis may be even now stealing upon us ‘unawares,’ ‘like a thief in the night,’ without observation, and therefore without creating alarm."

"As our elemental fire searches and tries all material substances, in like manner the Fire-principle of Eternity ‘tests every man’s work of what sort it is.’ And as fire subdues all to itself, so our Lord Jesus, in all those who are recipients of His Holy Fire, subdues all things to Himself. In other words, His Glory changes and transmutes them, until they are like Himself. None are able to live in the Heavenly Glory but those who have been purged and purified by that Glory."

"The Holy Fire, as we have already said, is destined to change the condition both of the human race and of the earth. The Pure Element of Eternity is eating its way into the elements of our world. This is precisely what is meant by our Lord’s coming, ‘in the Glory of the Father and the holy angels.’ Quietly the Element of Heaven is sowing itself both into men and nature. This purer Element will ultimately overcome nature’s tendency to putrescence and decay. Through its prevalence the whole

creation will be 'delivered from its bondage to corruption, and brought into a glorious liberty.'"

"As one stealthily mining his way into the interior of the house, which he purposes to spoil, even so, we are told, 'The Day of God' will unsuspectedly effect its entrance into the day of our world. 'As a snare it shall come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.' The supreme must have the supremacy. The vitality of God and of the heavens will stream more copiously through the world, men will inbreathe a more interior atmosphere, the earth will become lovelier and more fruitful, and the fierceness of animal life give place to gentleness."

"Slowly great preparations have been made, and are being made, to open ways for the fuller incoming of the Breath of God. The whole work of Christ served toward this end, by making our nature fully recipient of the Divine Glory. He is now the Centre of a stupendous body of glorified mankind. He and every member of His kingdom are intent on bringing their God-filled atmosphere, into the atmosphere in which He suffered and died, and in which they suffered and died, and in which we are suffering and dying."

"'The Day of God *will* come.' 'The Glory of God will cover the earth.' The order or law of its coming is first into men, and thence into the atmosphere, into the creatures, into vegetation and into mineral substances. The solar, or natural day, will continue, but with more of the Breath and glory of God within its bosom. The New Day will permeate and fill all things, as the day of nature now does, only more abundantly, more intensely, and with more glorious effects."

"The sweetest and most potent Day our earth has ever

known is nearing. The multitudes of our heavenly brothers and sisters are arranging themselves on our borders. They are full of expectation. And all men who love God, and who are in sympathy with earth's sorrows, are waiting in strong desire. Many of them are drawing 'The Day' more and more into their own breath and incorporating its mighty, holy tendernesses in their souls and bodies. They are becoming conscious that a secret atmosphere is evolving in them, and growing about them. All things foretell that a New Day is approaching; its motion towards us accounts for the special restlessness of society and of the world. The secret Force is disturbing all things that it may make all things new."

B. UNQUENCHABLE FIRE.

"I WILL ask you to glance through the prophecies of unquenchable Fire in the Old Testament:—

- I. The law of the fire of the altar of burnt offering (Lev. vi. 13).
- II. The prophecy of Huldah concerning Judah and its inhabitants (2 Kings xxii. 17; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 22).
- III. Of the strong and his work (Isa. i. 31). Glance through the chapter from the beginning, and observe it is addressed to Jerusalem.
- IV. Of Idumea (Isa. xxxiv. 10).
- V. Of the outcast from the Holy Mount—as quoted by Jesus (Isa. lxvi. 24).
- VI. Warning to men of Judah and Jerusalem (Jer. iv. 4).

VII. Of Jerusalem (Jer. vii. 20, xvii. 27).

VIII. Of the house of the King of Judah (Jer. xxi. 12).

IX. Of the forest of the south (Ezek. xx. 47).

X. Warning to house of Israel (Amos v. 6).

“Of these ten mentions of unquenchable fire, one is the law of the altar of burnt offering; out of the remaining nine, six distinctly concern Judah, Jerusalem, and Israel.

“Three out of the ten are addressed to, possibly, other than the chosen nation. Out of these three, the forest of the South is supposed to represent Jerusalem. The two that are left are both quoted by Jesus. The threatening of Idumea (Isa. xxxiv.) He uses in that memorable prophecy (Matt. xxiv.) in which, through the vista of the final judgments upon Jerusalem, He makes visible the final judgments upon the whole world. The description of the carcasses of the unnamed transgressors against Jehovah (Isa. lxvi.) He uses (Mark ix. 43) in warning the twelve called and chosen Apostles, to beware of being hardened in pride by the exercise of their excelling powers of hand, and foot, and eye, and of thereby offending the little ones of the flock. The only two threatenings of unquenchable fire which in their first utterance were not distinctly directed against the elect, are the only two quoted by Christ, and by Him applied to the elect.

“We may therefore justly consider that the unquenchable wrath, the fire that cannot be quenched, is always spoken of in threatening or in prophecy concerning God's Elect. And is there then no restoration of the outcast Elect? No hope for the building again of Jerusalem, for the rejoicing once more of Judah, for the peopling of Israel?

“Surely, from beginning to end of the Scripture reve-

lation, nothing can be clearer than the declaration that 'the gifts and calling of God are without repentance;' that God justifies His elect; that He is unswerving in His faithfulness and truth to the seed of Abraham, His friend; that He is pledged to bring again the captivity of the outcast, and to make Jerusalem a rejoicing and her people a joy. 'All Israel shall be saved.' Ezekiel gives the vine-branch 'given to the fire for fuel' as the symbol of the people of Jerusalem, with whom, nevertheless, God's covenant shall be remembered (Ezek. xv.).

"It is obvious, then, that the word concerning the unquenchable fire is not a word which shuts the door of all hope against those upon whom it comes. This is obvious upon the very surface, and the more abundantly obvious the deeper we search in Scripture. For instance, Jude (ver. 7) tells us that Sodom and Gomorrha are 'set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.' Is there no hope for Sodom's return? Can there be no hope for Sodom's return, when the Elect city of Christ, Capernaum, shall be brought down to hell with a judgment more terrible than Sodom's judgment? (Matt. xi. 24). We are not left to conjecture on this. Turn to Ezek. xvi.; observe (ver. 2) that the address is to Jerusalem; and then read from verse 44 to the end of the chapter, and you will find it clearly written that this Sodom, which is *set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of Eternal fire*, shall 'return to her former estate,' she and the cities around her; 'her daughters' shall return (Ezek. xvi. 55), and shall be received by Jerusalem as her own daughters (Ezek. xvi. 61); Jerusalem herself, the Elect, beloved of the Lord, shall be brought back only as in the midst of Sodom's returning captives (Ezek. xvi. 53).

“Let those who desire to keep closely to the text of Scripture explain these and many other passages in any other way, as satisfactorily in keeping with *verbal* as well as spiritual truths, as in the way of regarding them as plainly indicating that the threatening of the burning by the æonial fire does not shut the door of hope against them on whom it comes.”—*Parables of Judgment* (Elliot Stock).

THE END.

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